

AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE OF MOHAMMED,
THE KORAN,
Containing the Pretended Revelations of the Arabian Prophet,
AND THE
Conquests of the Saracens,

(From Crichton's History of Arabia.)



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THE LIFE OF MOHAMMED.

Contradictory Views of Mohammed's Life and Character—His Birth and Education—Visits Syria as a Merchant—Marries Kadijah—Affects an austere and retired Life—Proposes to reform Religion—Assumes the Title and Office of the Apostle of God—His first Converts—Announces publicly his prophetic Mission—His unfavourable Reception—His Proselytes increase—Miracle of splitting the Moon—The famous Night Journey to Heaven—His Secret League with the Medinian Converts—The Korish resolve to put him to Death—His Escape and Flight to Medina—Proclaims a Holy War against the Infidels—Battle of Bedr—Defeat of the Moslems at Ohud—Quarrel with the Jews—Siege of Medina—Expedition to Mecca, and Truce with the Korish—Siege and Capitulation of Khaihar—Attempt to poison the Prophet—Mohammed sends Letters and Ambassadors to Foreign Courts—Respect shown him by his Followers—Battle of Muta—Capture of Mecca by the Moslems—Demolition of Idols and Images—Battle of Honain—Surrender of Taif—Expedition to Tabuc—Increased Power and Success of Mohammed—His valedictory Pilgrimage to Mecca—His Sickness and Death—His personal Appearance—His private Character and Habits—His Wives and Concubines—His supposed Ignorance of Letters—Concluding Reflections.

THE life of Mahommed, and the peculiar institutions of which he was the author, have been treated at great length, and by an infinite number of writers; some of whom have spoken of them in a tone of bitter hostility, others in a style of panegyric, that destroys all confidence in their veracity. The narratives of the Mussulmans themselves, from whom it was natural to expect the most authentic and satisfactory accounts, as being the collectors, if not the actual witnesses, of the circumstances they relate, are unsafe guides. These writers had a deep interest in the fame of their prophet, which has tinged their histories with extreme partiality, and must greatly depreciate the value of their testimony. The Christian annalists we can hardly suppose to be more trustworthy in this particular than their Mohammedan opponents.

Hating both the creed and the apostle of the infidels, it is not likely they would give a fair representation* even of the truth; or that they would spread any reports but such as were to his prejudice, and which might tend to bring his impious forgeries into derision.

Though much uncertainty on this subject has been removed by our increased acquaintance with the literature of the East, and a more candid spirit of investigation introduced, there still remains considerable obscurity respecting the personal history of Mohammed. The narratives of his life are broken and disjointed, resting sometimes on equivocal evidence, and very often enveloped in a thick cloud of supernatural wonders, that makes it difficult to separate between earth and heaven or discriminate the exact bounds of truth and fiction.* To dignify these reveries with the name of history would be an insult to common sense; while to discard them entirely would have shorn, in the opinion of all true Mussulmans, the character of their prophet of its greatest glory. We have deemed it the more proper course to record the statements of these authors as we found them; satisfied that the broad line of separation, between the probable and

* The authors who have written Lives of Mohammed it would be tedious to enumerate. The best Arabic Biography yet discovered is that by Abulfeda, which was translated into Latin in 1723, and illustrated with copious notes by John Gagnier, Professor of Arabic at Oxford. This work, for a Mussulman, is candid and judicious. Al Beidawi, Shahrestani, Al Jannabi Nuvairi, Mircoud, and most of the other oriental historians, are full of legends, and not worth noticing here: they have been consulted and copiously used by D'Herbelot and the authors of the Universal History (Mod. Part, vol. i.). The Lives of Mohammed, not mere translations, but compiled from various authors, are innumerable. That by Dean Prideaux, published in 1697, has been long popular; it is learned but dull, compiled from suspicious authorities, and tainted with prejudice. The one by the Count de Boulainvilliers, which appeared in 1730, is deserving of no credit, either for its sentiments or its consistency with fact. 'It is a preliminary essay or romance rather than a history, being a mere fragment, and bringing the life of the Prophet only down to the fifth year of his mission.' The learned Abbé Maracci prefixed a life, full of bitter invective, to his Translation and Refutation of the Koran (in 1698). Gagnier, compiled a biography, in 2 vols., from the Koran and the best Arabic authors, in 1732. He is impartial; but he writes like a Mussulman,—recording facts and fables, miracles and visi-

the miraculous, will of itself point out to the reader what he ought to reject and what to believe. It falls not to the lot of ordinary mortals, for instance, to be exempted from original sin, to converse familiarly with angels, to split the moon, or make a personal excursion through the seven heavens; yet these and other marvellous exploits are gravely ascribed to the Arabian apostle. Such ridiculous extravagance stands self-refuted, and requires no antidote or contradiction.

Mohammed (or Mahomet, as he is improperly called) was born at Mecca; but the precise date of his birth has been disputed. The computation most generally approved has fixed it in the 569th year of our chronology.* The calumny of his early Christian adversaries, who sought to debase him into a man of low plebian origin, has long been exploded; for whatever uncertainty may rest on the first gradations of his pedigree, he could, without doubt, number among his ancestors in a direct line many generations of pure and genuine nobility.

The Arabs glory in the number of their children; it is the highest honour and ambition of their wives.† In this respect Providence had richly crowned the domestic happiness of Abdol-motaleb; he was the father of six daughters and thirteen sons. Abdallah was a younger son,—the best beloved of his father,—the most beautiful and amiable of the Arabian youth. His

one, with the same imperturbable solemnity, and without a single remark. That prefixed to Savary's Translation of the Koran is an excellent abridgement of the Prophet's Life.

* Or in 571, the lunar reckoning of the Arabs making a difference of more than two years. Elinaciu and Abulfarage adopt 571; Reiske, 572. The Benedictine monks (*Art. de Verif. des Dates*) fix it on the 10th of November, 570. Prideaux and Hottinger, on the authority of Arabian writers, remove it to May, 571. Gagnier makes it 569 of the vulgar era, or 578 from the birth of Christ.

† "It was the custom, that when a woman brought forth ten male children, she should be called Munejeba (or the ennobled), and her name be published among the Arabs, and they used to say that the wife of such a one is ennobled."—*Relation of Antar*, p. 21.

personal charms are said to have exposed him to many temptations, similar to what the virtuous Hebrew captive encountered in the service of Potiphar. The maidens of the Koreish pined in secret admiration, and eagerly courted his alliance. About his twenty-fifth year he was united to Amina, daughter of Wahab, chief of the Zahrites, a family of princely rank, being also descended from the Koreish. She was famed for her wisdom and beauty, and had been sought in marriage by the wealthiest of her kinsmen. The consummation of their nuptials was fatal to many languishing hopes; for the tradition of Ibn Abbas assures us, that on the same night 200 virgins expired of jealousy and despair. There was not a soothsayer, we are told, or prophetess, in all Arabia, but had intimation of the auspicious event; and not a bride but sighed to be the mother of a male child. The sole fruit of this union was Mohammed. His father being then absent with the caravans in Syria, to purchase a supply of provisions (for it was a time of scarcity), died at Medina on his return; and whether this event took place before or two months after the birth (according to Abulfeda), it appears certain he never saw this wonderful infant. Cut off in the flower of life, his orphan child was left in the cradle to the care of a widowed mother. Adversity seemed to be his only patrimony; for Abdallah, though of royal lineage was poor; and in the division of his inheritance, the prophet's share was but five camels, and an Ethiopian slave, named Baraka. On the seventh day, the venerable Abdolmotaleb made a splendid entertainment to the grandees of his tribe; and on this joyous occasion the infant received the name of Mohammed, contrary to the remonstrances of the Koreish, who would have preferred a name that was hereditary in the family.*

* This name is the past participle of the verb *Hamad*, and signifies the "praised" or "most glorious." Islam, the religion of Mohammed, and Moslem or

Not content with the narrative of simple facts, the credulous superstition of the Arabs has thrown a halo of wonders round the infancy of their apostle. Though destitute of worldly wealth, his birth was rich in prodigies. Like that of other great men who have astonished the world, it was accompanied by signs in heaven and miracles on earth. The prophetic light that surrounded him served his mother for a lamp, and shone with a brilliancy that illuminated the country as far as Syria: the sacred fire of the Persians, which had burned without interruption for a thousand years, was for ever extinguished; the palace of Khoosroo was rent by an earthquake, and fourteen of its towers levelled with the ground; events that prefigured the failure of the royal line of Persia, and the subjugation of that country by the Arabs, after the reign of fourteen kings.

A vast multitude of other fictions and supernatural prognostications, equally extravagant, were carefully collected by his biographers. They were devoutly believed, even during his life by his credulous followers; hundreds of whom were to be found, who, on their oath, would have attested the reality of them. These solemn wonders were obviously invented and propagated with a view to assimilate the birth of their pretended apostle to that of the Founder of Christianity; many of the Scripture texts prefiguring the one, and the marvellous circumstances accompanying his nativity, as recorded in the apocryphal gospels of St. Thomas and St. Barnabas, being literally appropriated to the other.

The nurture and education of her only child had devolved on Amina; but the custom of the Arabian nobility, and the unwholesome air of Mecca, made it necessary to delegate this maternal task to other hands; and the names of the different

Mussulman, come from the same root, *eslam*, which means consecrated or dedicated to God.

nurses that suckled this remarkable infant, the most celebrated of whom was Halima, of the tribe of Saab, have been scrupulously recorded. These facts, however, as well as his speaking in the cradle, and his purification from original sin by an angel, we leave to be studied in the legendary pages of the Moslem biographers.

In his sixth year Mohammed was deprived of his mother. This second calamity threw him entirely on the charity of his grandfather. Within ten years the venerable Addelmotaleb expired at the age of 110. Abu Taleb became his next protector, who appears to have been the eldest son and successor to his father's authority.* The uncle treated the orphan boy with paternal affection. The pure air and hardy nutriment of the desert (the Arabian children went quite naked) had already laid the foundation of a robust constitution ; the elements of a rough and scanty education were now supplied by the kindness of his relative.

A blank of five years has been filled up with inventions. We can only conclude that being designed for a mercantile life his instructions were likely to be suitable to his profession. At the age of thirteen he made a commercial journey to Syria in the caravan of his uncle. This expedition is barren of facts, but the void is occupied with imaginary adventures. Certain it is that here the youthful merchant had an opportunity of signaling his courage, or rather serving his first campaign in the ranks of his clansmen. But tradition has made this journey still more remarkable by several wonderful indications of his future elevation. It was in the fair of Bosra that he is alleged to have met the celebrated Nestorian monk, Felix or Sergius, surnamed Bahira, who is accused by the Christian writers of afterward assisting him in the contrivance and composition of the Koran. Till his twenty.

* Prideaux calls Abdallah the eldest son, and Boulainvilliers supposes him the youngest. Both are mistaken (vide Sale's Prelimin. Discourse, sect. ii. p. 50). Abulfeda makes Hamza and Al Abbas both older than Abu Taleb, and younger than Abdallah.—Gagnier, p. 67.

fifth year nothing further is recorded of his history. Some modern writers, such as the Count Boulainvilliers, during this interval, have schooled him in martial exercises; inured him to hunting and other manly pastimes, and carried him in imaginary voyages over all the East; but these we omit, as they have not the sanction of any Arabian author.

His probity and talents for business introduced him to the acquaintance of Kadijah a rich widow in Mecca. She was of noble extraction, her father, Kowailed, being of the tribe of the Kereish. Engaged extensively in traffic, she had realized an independent fortune. To her he was recommended by Abu 'Taleb as factor; and, as her promises were liberal, he undertook the superintendence of her affairs. Her esteem for him was increased by his fidelity in her service, and gradually ripened into affection. In this new capacity Mohammed made a second journey to Syria, where the interests of his mistress demanded his presence. The sales he effected of the merchandise intrusted to his charge were highly advantageous,—a circumstance credible enough in itself, without resorting to the fiction of the Arabs that his goods drew a double price in all the Syrian markets. Having made the necessary purchases, Mohammed prepared for his return. Kadijah, who had thought his absence long, was transported with joy at his success. Her heart, already half-won by the charms of his person, now burned with a passion she could not control. Far from resisting this honourable attachment, she offered him her hand and her fortune,—a generosity which he accepted with cheerfulness, and remembered till the last day of his life with gratitude.

At the time of his marriage Mohammed was twenty-five years of age, and the wealthy Kadijah was forty. Two husbands, Atik and Abu Halat, she had already laid in their graves; but she enjoyed the reputation of much prudence and an irreproach-

able life. Their nuptials were celebrated with great festivity, mirth, music, and dancing. But we shall pass without comment the angelic demonstrations of rejoicing on this occasion—how a heavenly voice pronounced a benediction on their union—how the boys and girls of paradise were led out in their bridal garments—how the hills and valleys capered for joy, and precious ointments were diffused over the whole earth. Among the terrestrial guests at this ceremony were Abu Taleb and the chief men of the Koreish. The marriage-contract, the formula of which has been preserved, recites, in the simple style of Arabian manners, the noble lineage of the bridegroom, his beauty, virtue, intelligence, and poverty; the reciprocal loves of the happy pair; and a promise on the part of Abu Taleb to pay the marriage-dowry of his nephew, which consisted of twelve ounces of gold, or (according to Abulfeda) twenty young camels.

Some have imputed a reluctance on the part of the bride's father to his alliance, as dishonourable to his family; while others would degrade the commercial agent into a mere driver of camels, or a menial servant in the household of his mistress. Both suppositions have originated in malice. Kadijah could suffer no degradation in the esteem of her kindred by a match with the grandson of their prince, young, handsome, and affectionate. Neither was there any reproach of servitude or dishonour in the prosecution of commerce. It was a lucrative occupation, in which the noblest and bravest were engaged. Sovereigns reckoned it no indignity to command their own caravans. This office was not merely a simple affair of merchandise,—it was also a military expedition, where they had to defend themselves and their cargo from the robbers of the desert. To conduct an escort of this kind was in truth to superintend the finances of the state and to maintain the freedom of trade, by repelling the aggressions of troublesome and rapacious enemies. Whether or how

long Mohammed continued after his altered circumstances to cultivate his fortune by traffic, is a question that has not been solved: nor is it of the smallest importance. Content with his domestic virtues, Kadijah became the mother of four sons and four daughters. This wealthy alliance restored the heir of Abdallah to the splendour of his ancestors, and to a station of equality with the richest in Mecca.

The total silence of his biographers for fifteen years has here, left a cloud of mystery to hang on the life and actions of Mohammed. We merely learn from Abulfeda, that God had inspired him with a love of solitude and retirement; and that every year, for a month at a time, he withdrew to the cave of Mount Hara, three miles from Mecca, where he devoted himself to fasting, prayer, and meditation. This studied and sanctimonious austerity was no doubt preparatory to his grand design. Retirement is not only the school of genius,—it is the fitting nursery of enthusiasm. The practice has been common in all countries. It is amid the solitudes of groves and grottoes, far removed from the bustle and distractions of the world, that the mind of the visionary finds its proper element; witness the converse of Minos with Jove on mount Ida, and the nightly visits which Numa received from his fabled nymph Egeria. The oracles or spiritual beings they consult dwell not in cities or crowds, but among the echoes of woods and rocks. The affected seclusion of the Arabian impostor was conformable to that of other enthusiasts. In the solemn obscurity of Hara he laid the foundation of his future greatness; for it was in the silence of that retreat that he meditated the scheme of his religion, perhaps the subjugation of his country.

It has been matter of controversy, whether in these transactions Mohammed ought to be regarded as a cunning knave or the dupe of enthusiasm. The point is scarcely worth the disput-

ing; for no imposture, civil or religious, was ever successful without a mixture of both. Had the Arabian adventurer been the mere dupe of a heated imagination, he might have continued to preach his doctrines with all the fervour of an apostle, among the tribes of the desert or the tents of the pilgrims; but his piety would hardly have dreamed of cutting its way with a sword to a temporal throne. Fanaticism was with him an earlier passion than ambition, and most likely supplied the first materials for the great political structure which he afterwards reared on this basis. Instead of religious innovations, had his aim been merely secular aggrandizement, there was much in the condition both of his own and the surrounding nations favourable to his revolutionary projects. No usurper, perhaps, ever enjoyed these advantages to a greater extent. Nor can we suppose that a vigorous and reflecting mind like his, enlarged by travel and observation on mankind, could lack either courage or discernment to turn them to his interest. The political state of the Eastern World was wretched in the extreme. Exhausted with continual wars, and enervated by luxury, it could offer little resistance to any aggressor. Had the Roman empire retained its pristine vigour, the Arabian heresy must have been instantly crushed, or driven to the inaccessible retreats of the mountains. Its hapless founder might have been condemned to the stake by a council of bishops, or carried in chains as a rebel to languish out his days in some dungeon of the Grecian capital. But this mighty power had fallen, under the successors of Constantine, into a state of weakness and decay. The Goths in the west, and the Huns in the east, had overrun its finest provinces and made the once potent Cæsars tributaries to a barbarous conqueror.

But whatever information Mohammed had, or whatever use he designed to make of the advantageous posture of oriental affairs, his grand and earliest object of attention was the idolatry

of his countrymen. He did not pretend to introduce a new religion; for that would have alarmed the jealousies of all parties, and combined their discordant opinions into a general opposition. His professed object was merely to restore the only true and primitive faith, such as it had been in the days of the patriarchs and prophets, from Adam to the Messiah. The fundamental doctrine of this ancient worship, which he undertook to purify from the alloy it had unhappily contracted among a frail and degenerate race of men, was the UNITY OF GOD.

A principle thus simple and obvious, which no sect had ever denied, and which presented to reason nothing that it could not easily conceive, was a broad foundation for a popular and universal religion,—an advantage which Mohammed fully appreciated. With the Jews, who clung to their abrogated ceremonial, he maintained the authority of the Pentateuch, and the inspiration of the prophets from Moses to Malachi. With the Christians he admitted the Divine mission of Christ, and the truth of his Gospel; for he made the revelations both of the Old and the New Testament a basis for his own pretensions.* But as the Arabs were the more immediate objects of his imposture, he took more than ordinary pains to conciliate their affections. While lamenting the madness and folly of the idolatries in which they were plunged, he showed an extreme indulgence to their prejudices. Their popular traditions and ceremonies—such of them at least as favoured his own views—he retained, and even rendered more attractive, by adding the sanction of Heaven to customs already hallowed by immemorial usage.

* For the Author of Christianity the Mohammedans are taught to entertain a high reverence. "Verily," says the Koran, "Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the Apostle of God and his Word; which he conveyed into Mary: honourable in this world and in the world to come, and one of those who approach near to the presence of God"—(Chap. iii. iv.) Yet they consider him a mere mortal, and allege that a criminal or a phantom was substituted for him on the cross.—*Koran*, ib, and *Sale's Notes*. *Maracci*, in *Alcoran*, tome ii. p. 113, 173; and *Prodrom*. part iii p. 163.

But the most pleasing of all his doctrines, and the most captivating to the human heart, was the felicity promised in another world. The Mohammedan paradise is one of the richest and most seductive fictions of oriental imagination. The elements of its happiness consist not in pure and spiritual pleasures. These were too refined, and quite unsuited to the sensual habits of the Arab. The unlettered barbarian cannot comprehend the nature of abstract enjoyment, or how it can be felt without the agency of the bodily organs. To these carnal ideas Mohammed addressed his allurements, painted in the gayest colours that a luxurious fancy could invent. Gardens fairer than that of Eden, watered by a thousand streams, cooling fountains and groves of unfading verdure, adorned these happy mansions. The desires of the blessed inhabitants were to be gratified with pearls and diamonds,—robes of silk,—palaces of marble,—rich wines,—golden dishes,—blooming girls, made of musk, with black eyes, of resplendent beauty and virgin purity. While these costly and exquisite indulgences were provided for the meanest believer, the most excruciating torments that imagination could suggest were denounced against all who refused to embrace the faith of Mohammed. Seven hells, differing in the degree of their pain, were to receive the damned; and the wretched sufferer might judge of his terrible doom when he was informed that the tenderest of these punishments was to eat burning victuals and to be shod with shoes of fire, the heat of which would cause his scull to boil like a caldron.

One other artifice was wanted to give effect to this plausible system,—the sanction of a Divine authority. A succession of prophets had already appeared in the world to instruct and reprove mankind, ever prone to wander from the truth; all of whom had their credentials attested by Heaven. In this catalogue of inspired teachers, Mohammed determined to enrol himself. It was

a bold but a necessary policy ; and accordingly, next to the **UNITY OF THE DEITY**, stands the second fundamental article of the Mussulman faith,—that **MOHAMMED IS THE APOSTLE OF GOD**. On these two pillars,—the one an eternal truth, the other an impious fiction,—the Eastern imposture has rested with unshaken stability for upwards of 1200 years.

Having at length matured his plans, and acquired a reputation for sanctity corresponding in some measure with the high and venerable office he was about to assume, he now resolved to make his pretensions to revelation no longer a secret. His fortieth year was the period chosen for announcing his mission to the world. He had retired, according to custom, to the grotto of Mount Hara, accompanied with some of his domestics. It was on the 25th of the month Ramadan,—the night styled in the Koran *Al Kadr*, or the Divine Decree,—that he received his instalment into the apostolic office in “a true and nocturnal vision.” The archangel Gabriel, his confidant and oracle in all his celestial communications, descended in a brilliant form. He held in his hand a book brought from the seventh heaven. “Read !” exclaimed the angel. “I cannot,” replied his awe-struck pupil. “Read,” added the other, “in the name of God, the Creator, who hath formed man, and taught him the use of the pen, and lighted up his soul with a ray of knowledge !” The Prophet obeyed ; and a voice immediately pronounced these words :—“O Mohammed ! thou art the apostle of God, and I am Gabriel.” This joyful inauguration into his ministry was received in silent wonder ; the angel, having performed his part, ascended slowly and majestically until he disappeared in the clouds.

The conductor of the Israelites had produced the Pentateuch, and the Redeemer of mankind had taught the Gospel. This “last of the prophets,” too, must have his book ; and now, for

the first time, the Koran descends to earth. It was one of the most skilful of his artifices, and to which he mainly owed his success,—that instead of communicating this celestial volume entire, as the archangel brought it, it was doled out in morsels as suited his convenience. This sage manœuvre gave him a complete mastery over the oracles of Heaven ; for he could make them speak according to circumstances. The Roman pontiff, who at this very time (A. D. 606) had begun to assert his claim to universal supremacy, might boast of the keys of Peter ; but Mohammed held the keys of providence, with which he could shut or unlock the gates of revelation at pleasure.

This pretended interview with the archangel rested solely on the suspicious authority of his own assertion. The first person to whom he related the tidings was Kadijah. The dutiful wife believed, or affected to believe, the sacred fable, with all its glorious accompaniments ; and with a solemn oath she declared her conviction that he was the true apostle of his nation. “ Among men,” said the Prophet on this occasion, “ many have been found perfect ; but of women only four—Aisa, the daughter of Pharoah ; Mary, the daughter of Amran ; Kadijah, the wife, and Fatima, the daughter of Mahommed ;” where it will be observed that, with singular modesty, he includes the half of these female paragons in his own family. The second proselyte was his cousin, Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, then only eleven years of age, whom he had brought up in his own family with a fatherly tenderness. His slave, Zaid, was the third convert. Whatever might have been his scruples, they were overcome by the promise of liberty ; and the grateful domestic recognised with joy the divinity of a master from whom he expected and obtained his freedom.

The next and most important of his conversions was that of Abdallah, surnamed Abu Beker, an opulent citizen of Mecca.

He was a most zealous Mussulman ; and, being a person of great authority among the Koreish, he prevailed on five of the principal men in the city—Othman, Abdalrahman, Saad, Zobeir, and Telha—to join the standard of the Prophet. These six individuals were his chief associates—his main instruments in disseminating his religion—the partners of his victories—and some of them his successors on the throne. Three years were thus spent in devotional intrigue and the secret process of discipleship, during which the shades of mystery were allowed to conceal from the world his doctrines and his crafty designs.

But the time had now arrived when he could rely with confidence on the attachment of his new proselytes. Immediately the angel commanded him to make known his sacred vocation, and to exhort his friends and neighbours in particular to forsake their errors, if they hoped to escape the vengeance of an offended Deity. The obedient apostle accordingly directed Ali to prepare an entertainment—a lamb and a bowl of milk—to which forty guests of the race of Hashem were invited. After some interruption, Mohammed addressed the astonished assembly--“Friends, I this day offer you what no other person in all Arabia can offer,—the most valuable of gifts,—the treasures of this world and of that which is to come. God has enjoined me to call you to his service. Who among you will be my vizier, to share with me the burden and the toils of this important mission—to become my brother, my vicar, and ambassador?” This address was heard with silent surprise ; and none seemed disposed to accept the proffered dignity. At length the impatient Ali made answer—“I, O Prophet, will be your vizier, and obey your commands ! Whoever dares to oppose you, I will tear out his eyes, dash out his teeth, break his legs, and rip open his body !” On this burst of enthusiasm, Mohammed caught the youth in his arms with the liveliest demonstrations of affection. “Behold,” said he

“ my brother and vicegerent ! Listen, and obey him.” Shouts of contemptuous laughter followed this romantic installation. The whole company turned their sarcastic eyes on Abu Taleb, as if to inquire whether the rights and honours of a father were to be violated by rendering obedience to the authority of his own son.

Far from being silenced by this ridicule, or discouraged by the unfavourable reception of his first public attempt, the interpid apostle laboured with indefatigable zeal, and marched onward with unshaken resolution to the final accomplishment of his designs. No reproaches or affronts could damp his ardour, for he bore them apparently without resentment ; while every artifice was employed to subdue opposition. But it was to the force of his natural eloquence as a preacher, and the fertility of his genius, that he mainly trusted. On solemn festivals, and in the times of pilgrimage, he frequented the temple, and accosted the strangers of every province. Their imaginations and their passions were alternately excited by threats and promises. To the believer the carnal enjoyments of paradise were liberally offered ; while, for the infidel, collars, chains, and torments unutterable were laid up in store.

The people trembled for their gods, which already seemed toppling from their pedestals. The Koreish, especially, dreaded the effects of his zeal. They beheld the worship which was their chief means of support threatened with extinction ; and they resolved to crush in the birth this attempt to sap the foundation of their wealth and consequence. A deputation of the principal men of the tribe laid their fears and complaints before Abu Taleb : “ Unless thou impose silence on thy nephew, and check his audacity, we shall take arms in defence of our gods. The ties of blood shall not restrain us from drawing the sword, and we shall see on which side victory will declare itself.” Alarmed at these menaces, he seriously exhorted the Prophet to abandon

his rash and impracticable schemes. "Spare thy remonstrances," said the daring fanatic; "though the idolators should arm against me the sun and the moon, planting the one on my right hand and the other on my left, it would not divert me from my resolution." Meanwhile the Koreish, finding that neither threats nor entreaties could prevail, in a public assembly of their whole tribe, pronounced sentence of exile against all who had embraced the religion of Islam.

Five years of the Prophet's mission had elapsed ; and his success may be estimated from the tradition that, of his disciples, who were now compelled to seek refuge in voluntary banishment, only eighty-three men and eighteen women, besides children, retired to Abyssinia.* While he remained exposed to this tempest of indignation at Mecca, a fortunate accident brought an important accession to his party in the conversion of two distinguished individuals---the brave Hamza, one of his uncles, and Omar, the second of the caliphs. The Koreish had secretly plotted his death ; and there was only wanted an arm bold enough to strike the blow. The ferocious Omar agreed to be the assassin ; but whether through the remonstrances of a friend, or, according to Abulfeda, by hearing a few sublime verses of the Koran read, instead of plunging his dagger in the breast of the apostle, the murderer was transformed into one of his most devoted proselytes.

For years the Koreish had beheld with jealousy the rising pre-eminence of the family of Hashem. Zeal for their national religion imbittered those political animosities, and served as a cloak to cover their malice. A solemn decree was passed in the name of the whole tribe, engaging themselves to renounce all commu-

* On this subject the Abyssinian annals are silent ; and the Mohammedan statement has been considered a fiction.—Ludolf. in *Comment. ad Hist. Ethiop.* p. 284. Maracci, in *Prodrom.* p. i. cap. 2. Gagnier, *not. ad Abulfed.* p. 24. *La Vie de Mah.* c. x.

nication with the Hashemites ; neither to buy nor sell with them, to marry nor give in marriage ; but to pursue them with implacable enmity until they should deliver up^c this dangerous innovator to the resentment of the nation, and the justice of the gods whose worship he had deserted. The deed was written on parchment, and suspended on the wall of the Kaaba, that all eyes might read it.

Having no security in the city, the persecuted faction withdrew to a stronghold in the neighbourhood. Here they remained three years in a state of siege ; the only intervals of their captivity being the sacred months, when hostilities were prohibited. During the ceremonies of the pilgrimage, the two factions regularly met, and frequently came to blows. The orations of Mohammed in the temple were often drowned amid the clashing of swords and the exhortations of the idolaters in behalf of their ancient divinities.

Hitherto the credit of Abu Taleb had been the main asylum of the apostle and his followers, and was perhaps the true cause of rescinding the prohibitory edict, after it had subsisted five years. Death deprived him of that support ; and within a month this domestic calamity was followed by another,—the loss of Kadijah in her 65th year. The Prophet was inconsolable ; for he had always regarded her with ardent and undivided affection. During the five-and-twenty years of their marriage his fidelity was irreproachable ; and the rights or feelings of the wife were never insulted by the society of a rival. His tears and praises spoke his sorrow long after she was in the grave ; and his excessive encomiums wounded the pride of her successor, the youthful Ayesha. “ Was she not old,” said the petulant and blooming daughter of Abu Beker, “ and has not God given you a younger and a better in her place ? ” — “ No, truly,” replied the grateful apostle, “ there never can be a better ; she believed in men when

were men despised me. She was generous, and gave me all she possessed, when the world hated and persecuted me." Misfortunes so distressing and prejudicial to his interests made the Moham-medans commemorate this as the Year of Mourning.

A valuable accession was about the same time received to his flock in a small party of the tribes of Khazraj and Aus, who dwelt at Medina, and had come to Mecca, on the usual pilgrimage. The secret motive of their conversion was a hope that their new master was the long-expected Messiah, and would deliver their allies, the Jews, as he had promised, from the vassalage to which they had been so long subjected. On their return these deluded proselytes became enthusiastic in disseminating so welcome a creed among their fellow-citizens.

Historians, or rather the lovers of the marvellous, have signalized this period of Mahommed's life with two remarkable events, the absurdity of which might have consigned them to oblivion had not the gravest of the Moslem doctors maintained their reality. Religion, whether true or false, has usually appealed to the confirmation of miracles. These credentials the impostor himself admitted to be authentic. According to his own doctrine therefore, the unbelieving Arabs might demand, and they did repeatedly urge him to produce, similar evidence of his mission. Sensible of his weakness, he evaded the force of their objections—appealing to the inimitable composition of the Koran as the greatest of all miracles, and protecting himself by the obscure boast of vision and prophecy.

His votaries, however, were neither so modest nor so ingenious. Of his miraculous gifts they were more confident than he was himself; and much learning has been expended, and innumerable volumes written, to convince the world that his miracles were more numerous than those of all the inspired teachers who had gone before him.

The first of these signal performances was the miracle of the Splitting ; alluding to his cleaving the orb of the moon in twain. The Koreish, wishing to confound him before the eyes of his fellow-citizens, had challenged him to verify his claims by bringing that luminary from heaven in presence of the whole assembly. Mohammed accepted the proposal with confidence. At his command the sky was darkened at noon ; when the obedient planet, though but five days old appeared full-orbed, leaped from the firmament, and, bounding through the air, alighted on the summit of the Kaaba, which it encircled by seven distinct revolutions. Turning to the Prophet, it did him reverence, addressed him in very elegant Arabic, and pronounced a discourse in his praise, concluding with the formula of the Moslem creed. These salutations finished, it entered the right sleeve of his mantle, and made its exit by the left. Then descending from the collar of his robe to the fringe, it mounted into the air, separating into two halves. In this manner it resumed its station in the sky, the parts gradually uniting in one round and luminous orb, as before. Such is the substance of a ridiculous fiction invented by the biographers of Mohammed, who have coloured it with more extravagance and minuteness of detail than we have ventured to narrate.

The next legendary-adventure of the Prophet is yet more extraordinary—the *Mesra*, or famous nocturnal journey to heaven ; of which the Eastern writers, in the wild delirium of their fancy, have given the most laboured and grotesque descriptions. With sublime touches of imagination, that would have done honour to the muse of Milton or Dante, they have mixed a legion of idle phantoms and puerile wonders too shocking and extravagant even for the credulity of childhood.

~ On the night of this celestial excursion, calm but exceedingly dark, Mohammed represents himself as asleep between the hills of

Safa and Meroua, when Gabriel approached and awoke him. Having apprized the prophet of his intended voyage, he presented him with the animal called Borak, a sort of nondescript, larger than an ass but smaller than a mule, with a human face and the body of a horse. His colour was milk-white; the hair of his neck of fine pearls; his ears emeralds, and his eyes two sparkling hyacinths. His whole body, wings, and tail, bristled with the finest jewelry.

In the twinkling of an eye they cleared the hills of Mecca, and were on the top of Sinai, where prayers were said, and where the print of the beast's hoof is still shown. In the same manner they performed their devotions at Jerusalem, where Mohammed received the salutations of the ancient prophets, and met with divers other adventures. Leaving Borak fastened to a ring at the gate of the temple, the travellers ascended by a ladder of light, through an immense expanse of air, till they reached the first heaven, distant a journey of 500 years from the earth. It was composed of a subtle vapour, with a roof of fine silver, from which hung the stars by chains of massive gold. They entered by a prodigious gate, which on the name of Mohammed being announced, was opened by the porter. The first person with whom he exchanged salutations was Adam,* who appeared in the form of a decrepit old man, and hailed him as the greatest and best of his posterity. The whole firmament swarmed with angels all busy in their several occupations, some watering the clouds, others chaunting hymns. They appeared in all manner of shapes,—men, beasts, and birds; for each assumed the likeness of those terrestrial creatures intrusted to their spiritual guardianship. The most conspicuous of these was the angel or representative of the cocks, white as snow, and of such gigantic stature that his head touched the second heaven (a distance of 500 years' travel); or, as

* Mohammedan authors differ in the location of the patriarchs. Few will dispute, and we have not thought it important to contest points of fabulous precedency.

others affirm, reached through all the seven heavens. He assisted in the matin songs of the angelic choirs, and gave the signal for all his species to crow, whether material or immaterial.

The second heaven was of pure gold, and contained twice as many angels as the first. Here Mohammed was saluted by Noah, who commended himself to his prayers; but he was not permitted to take further notice of the various marvels he saw. The third heaven was made of precious stones, and more populous than the second. Here the travellers were greeted by David and Solomon, and saw a huge angel called the Faithful of God, who had 100,000 others under his command. In the fourth heaven, which was of emerald, they received the felicitations of Enoch and Joseph. Here they beheld an angel of a very stern and terrible aspect; the distance between whose eyes was equal to 70,000 days' journey according to the rate of Arabian travelling; and such was his capacity, that he could* have swallowed the seven heavens and seven earths as easily as a pea. Before him was a large table on which he was continually writing; inserting the names of all that were born, computing the days of their lives, and blotting them out from his register the moment their allotted portion of years expired. It was Azrael, the angel of death, whose emissaries traverse the earth perpetually, keeping watch over the issues of human life. No smile ever lighted up his dismal visage; his business being to weep and make lamentations for the sins of men.*

Into the fifth heaven, which was composed of adamant, they were admitted by a gate of pure silver, inscribed with the Mo-

* Prideaux condescends (and so does Maracci) to grapple in serious combat with this phantom. As the distance between a man's eyes is in proportion to his height as to 1 to 72, he calculates that this angel must have been four times the length of all the seven heavens, and therefore could not stand in one of them. "Here," says he, "Mahomet was out in his mathematics." But a capacious Mussulman might argue with the dean that the angel was not intended to stand, but to sit; for he told Mohammed he had not permission to quit his desk from the creation of man till the final judgment.—*Prid. Life*, p. 61. See also *Buxtorf's Synag. Jud.* cap. 50, and *Purchas' Pilgrims*, lib. ii. cap. 20.

hammedan creed. Aaron gratulated them on their arrival. This sphere was the great storehouse of God's wrath ;—a black and horrid pit, vomiting forth a thick smoke, the stench of which was insupportable. The presiding angel of this infernal treasury was hideously deformed, his withering look being enough to blast the material universe. His eyes were of rolling flame ; his face like copperas, disfigured with wens and excrescences, and around him lay darts and chains of fire, the terrible instruments of divine vengeance, which were kept in constant preparation for rebellious sinners—especially for the unbelieving Arabs. Quitting these dreary mansions they advanced to the sixth heaven, which was of carbuncle. At some distance they perceived an aged man, with shaggy hair, clothed in a woollen garment, and leaning on a staff. It was Moses who saluted his brother prophet ; but immediately burst into tears at the thought that this “ Arabian boy ” would be instrumental in bringing more of the race of Ishamel into paradise than he and all the prophets had done of the Jewish nation. Here they met with another prodigy in pneumatology,—an angel, one half of whose body was snow and the other fire ; yet these discordant elements were neither melted nor extinguished.

But the most marvellous of all created beings was the tutelar angel of the seventh heaven. He had 70,000 heads, each head 70,000 faces, each face as many mouths, each mouth as many tongues, and each tongue spoke seventy thousand different languages, all of which were employed incessantly in praise and adoration. This last and highest of the celestial spheres was made of divine light. Here was the abode of Abraham ; and, according to some, of Jesus Christ, who is alleged to have treated Mohammed with the same respect as the other prophets.*

* Prideaux thinks, in this latter instance, the prophet altered his style of salutation, acknowledging the superiority of the Messiah,—a supposition at variance with the doctrine taught in the Koran.

Having penetrated to the lotus-tree (Al Sedra), which is the utmost limit of created knowledge, the boundary of these delicious regions, beyond which no angel dares to pass, Gabriel took leave of his fellow-traveller, commending him to the protection of superior spirits during the remainder of his journey. Continuing his march through ranks of glorified cherubim, and crossing two seas, one of light and one of darkness, the solitary prophet passed the 70,000 veils of separation, each being a journey of 500 years in thickness, and the same in distance between them. They were composed, some of darkness, others of fire, snow, water, ether, and chaos. Finally, he pierced the veils of beauty, of perfection, of omnipotence, of singularity, of immensity, and of unity. When the last of these was raised, 70,000 spirits were seen prostrate before the throne, which was surrounded by a light of the most dazzling brightness. A voice commanded him to draw near; on which he advanced till within two cubits, or bows' length, of the Divine presence. As a mark of his favour, the Almighty, we are informed, laid his hand on the prophet's shoulder, when a feeling of intense cold thrilled to the marrow over his whole frame; but was immediately succeeded by a sensation of inexpressible sweetness. This was followed, as he pretended, by a long and familiar intercourse with the Supreme Being, who revealed to him many hidden mysteries, instructed him in the knowledge of his law, and conferred on him several extraordinary privileges. The last of his instructions was the command of fifty daily prayers, afterward reduced by the advice of Moses to five enjoined on all Mussulmans.

Bidding adieu to these glorious regions, Mohammed rejoined his conductor Gabriel, whom he found by the lotus-tree. The travellers now bent their course towards the earth, receiving every where, as they passed, the compliments and benedictions of angels, who flocked in crowds to salute them. At Jeru-

salem they found Borak in the exact position they had left him ; and in less than a second they arrived at Mecca,—the slumbering inhabitants being quite unconscious of the transactions of that marvellous expedition : for the whole journey, the labour of so many thousand years, was performed in the tenth part of a night. Such is the celebrated *History of the Ascension*, as Abu Horaira calls it, whose minute and circumstantial account we have abridged from Gagnier.

A controversy arose, and continued long to divide the Mohammedan world, whether the nocturnal voyage was a real and corporeal journey, or merely a vision. Ayesha, his wife, maintained (or tradition in her name) that the prophet never left her bed, and that his spirit, and not his body travelled. Some compromised the miracle, by admitting a real translation of the body from Mecca to Jerusalem, but regarding the ascension itself as a dream. Others strenuously maintained the corporeity of the whole voyage from beginning to end ; declaring that to deny this was a damnable error, and as much an act of infidelity as to reject the Koran. The Turks celebrate the 20th night of Rajeb by a grand festival, in commemoration of this event.*

While Mecca was filled with disputes on the nocturnal voyage, and ridiculing its author as a dreamer and a visionary, the streets of Medina resounded with his praises. The zealous converts there, twelve of whom had been vested by Mohammed with apostolical authority, had animated others with their own enthusiasm, and considerably multiplied the number of proselytes.

Mosaab their chief repaired to Mecca, at the time of the pilgrimage, with seventy-three men and two women, all eager to do obeisance at the feet of their master, and proffer him their assistance. At a private conference Al Abbas explained to them the persecutions his nephew had suffered on account of his opi-

* Vide Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 80, and authorities quoted there, Koran, chap. xvii. 177.

nions; the necessity of abandoning his native place to seek protection elsewhere; and the favourable asylum, which seemed to present itself in their generous proposal. "And what will be our recompense should we fall in the quarrel?" "Paradise!" This single word fixed their determination. They expressed their resolution to defend, and never to betray him; and took an oath to commit no vice, and to protect him with life and fortune, "as they would their wives and children, against all nations, black and red, who should dare to oppose the faith and the apostle of the Koran." To this solemn pledge of mutual fidelity, called the Women's Oath, may be traced the first vital spark of the Saracen empire.

The altered fortunes of the impostor changed the course of his policy, and his ambition seemed to drop its veil in proportion as the means of support increased. Hitherto his pretended revelations had spoken nothing but the language of peace and forbearance. But no sooner did a concurrence of favorable circumstances draw over a sufficient party to his views, and open a friendly retreat in the heart of a warlike city, then he threw off the mask, and resolved to substitute a mode of conversion less tedious and uncertain in its operation than the gentler arts of argument and persuasion. The permission of Heaven to take up defensive arms was changed into the stern command to make war. Chapter after chapter descended, to encourage the faithful in the work of extirpation; for Gabriel, who had withheld these injunctions so long as discretion was the better part of valour, was now ready to quicken the sacred process of excision by new revelations. "Make war against unbelievers—strike off their heads, and strike off the ends of their fingers. This shall they suffer because they have resisted God and his apostle." (Chap. viii. and xlvii.)

Of the secret confederacy with the Medinians the Koraish were

soon apprised; and they foresaw the possibility of immediate invasion from the two most warlike tribes in their vicinity. An extraordinary council was assembled, headed by Abu Sofian, who had usurped the sovereignty of Mecca at the death of Abu Taleb, and thus excluded the family of Hesham from the throne. The proposition of Abu Jehel was carried, that Mohammed should be put to death by assassination. A man from each tribe was to be selected, who with their poniards were to execute the sentence while he lay asleep; and by imbruing so many hands in the guilty deed, they hoped to overpower any attempts on the part of his kinsmen or followers to avenge his death. The devoted apostle had timely information (by the agency of Gabriel, or rather the aid of a human spy) of this conspiracy, though the following night was to have witnessed its execution. He communicated the secret to the generous Ali; and having instructed him to wrap himself in his green mantle and lie down in his place, he took his departure; eluding by this stratagem the vigilance of the assassins, who had already planted a guard at the door. Favoured by the darkness of the night, Mohammed reached the house of Abu Beker in safety. Without delay these two fugitives left the city on foot; and, to lull suspicion, repaired with a hired guide to the cave of Thor, a hill three miles from Mecca, where they lay concealed for three days, receiving in the twilight of each evening, from Abdallah and Asama, the son and daughter of Abu Beker, a secret supply of intelligence and food.

Meantime the assassins, perceiving through a crevice their supposed victim, and waiting in anxious silence the approach of slumber, remained on the watch till morning, when they were undeceived by the appearance of Ali, whom they allowed to escape unmolested. The intrepidity of the heroic youth commanded the respect of the Kōreish, and was made the subject of exalted panegyric by the Moslem historians, who have held up his fidelity in exposing his own life to save that of his benefactor

as an example which angels were recommended to imitate. Two of these spiritual messengers, we are told, were stationed near his bed, the one at the head, the other at the foot; but their presence seemed to have failed in quieting his agitation; for, in some verses still extant, he has expressed with considerable pathos the conflicting emotions of hope and fear, of tenderness for his friend and confidence in religion, which filled his bosom on that occasion with perplexing suspense.

Stung with rage and disappointment, the Koreish sent spies and armed parties to explore every haunt in the neighbourhood of the city; and offered a reward of a hundred camels to any man that should take the adventurer alive or dead. They arrived at the cavern, whose terrified inmates overheard their conversation. "We are only two," said the trembling Abu Beker, who had shed many bitter tears, at the desperate fortunes of his master. "There is a third," replied the undaunted prophet,— "It is God himself." A cherished tradition of the Arabs has invented a providential deceit, which saved the fugitives,—a pigeon's nest with two eggs, and a spider's web drawn completely across the mouth of the passage. Convinced from these appearances that the place was solitary and inviolate, the pursuers desisted from all further examination. The virtues of this miracle, Mohammed used to say, were better than a coat of double armour in defending him from the swords of his enemies.*

The greatest impatience was manifested at Medina for the coming of the prophet. At the suburbs he was met by 500 of the inhabitants, who received him with every possible demonstration of joy. Here he was again joined by the faithful Ali,

* Al Damiri, in his history of Animals, assures us, that in memory of this event, the pigeon was held sacred by the Musulmans; and that, for the same reason, Mohammed forbade the killing of spiders. Some allege, that the fable of the pigeon whispering revelations into his ear, to persuade his followers, as the Christians relate, that he was divinely inspired, took its origin from this circumstance.—*Pococke, Spec.* p. 186. *Rotund. de Relig. Moham.* p. 359. *Gugnier, La Vie de Mahom.* p. 290. *Grotius, de Veritat. Relig. Christ.*

within three days after his arrival. The day of his entering the town, which now changed its name of Yatreb for that of Medina (or Medinat el Nebbi, the city of the Prophet), is generally admitted to have been the 16th of Rebiah 1., he having left Mecca on the first of that month.*

The religion of the Koran, after struggling with thirteen years of misfortune, might have withered in the bud, had it not struck firm root in the loyalty and devotion of the Medinian converts. The first care of the apostle was to erect a place of worship, where he might publicly discharge the sacred functions of his office. A small parcel of desolate ground was purchased by Abu Bekr, and on this chosen spot were founded a mosque and a house for the prophet. It was the patrimony of two orphans; and the enemies of Mohammed have gravely but falsely accused him of despoiling the helpless children of their inheritance.†

To hasten the completion of this venerable structure, Mohammed laboured with his own hands; it was merely a rude chapel with mud walls, on which was placed a roof of palm-leaves, supported by the trunks of date-trees for pillars. Near it was built

* The departure of the prophet has fixed the memorable epoch of the Hejira, or Flight, the era by which the Mohammedan nations still compute their lunar years. Like that of the Christians, it was not introduced until some time after the death of its founder. Its appointment belongs to the Caliph Omar, who, being appealed to in a controversy between a debtor and his creditor, the former alleging that the month mentioned in the bill did not belong to the current year, but to the following, and consequently that the money demanded was not then due, ordained, that to remedy all such inconveniences, their computations in future should begin with the flight of the apostle from Mecca. This new epoch, however, made no alteration in the ancient form of the Arabian year, which commenced, as before, on the first of the month Moharram, fifty-nine days earlier than the departure of the prophet. But in order to simplify their calculations, the Hejira was made to precede the real event by fifty-nine days, and is generally supposed to correspond with Friday, the 16th of July, in the year of our chronology 622.

† Prideaux's story of the robbery of the poor orphans, sons of a carpenter, and the injustice of the impostor, is shown to be erroneous. Al Najjar, which he translates carpenter, was the name of a rich and noble tribe. Gagnier adduces the authority of Jannabi and Bokhari, that the ground was offered him in a present, which he refused; and that Abu Bekr paid the money out of his own pocket. "Ils lui disent, 'O Apotre de Dieu, nous vous le cedons en pur don.' Le Prophete voulut absolument l'acheter, et Abu Bekre le paya de ses propres deniers."—*La Vie de Mah.* p. 302.

a house for his youthful bride, Ayesha, then only in her ninth year,—such is the premature ripeness of Eastern climes. Already the Prophet had divided his affections between her and Sawda, one of his earliest disciples ; and shortly after he espoused Haphsa, the widowed daughter of Omar ; thus confirming his interests by forming matrimonial connexions with three of the principal men of his party. The etiquette of a separate habitation was a mark of attention which he paid to all his wives ; and in a brief space, the new temple saw its precincts adorned with nine of these conjugal mansions.

The next and most essential object of Mohammed was to amalgamate the jarring elements of his congregation. The Medianian proselytes had received the honourable title of Ansars, or Helpers, and the exiles of Mecca took the name of Mohajerin,—Refugees, or companions of his flight. To eradicate the seeds of jealousy which this distinction might create, both parties were bound by a fraternal league, not only to live in peace and concord, but to love and cherish each other with the tenderness of brothers. As an additional tie, he joined them in pairs, each refugee being coupled with an auxiliary companion. This expedient was completely successful. The holy brotherhood respected their obligations both in peace and war, during the life of their master vied with each other in a generous rivalry of loyalty and valour. Once only in an accidental quarrel was the voice of discord known to interrupt their affectionate union ; but such was the stern spirit of their fidelity, that the believing son offered to lay the head of his idolatrous and offending father at the apostle's feet.

The second year of the Hejira was ushered in with the institution of certain external rites of the Mohammedan worship. To gratify the Jews, the *kebla*, or point to which they turned their faces in prayer, was fixed in the direction of Jerusalem ; but in trying to

ingratitude himself with the Ansarian party, the Prophet greatly displeased the Arabs, whom nothing could wean from their respect for the Kaaba. Again the omnipotence of revelation was called in; and henceforth all true Mussulmans were commanded, from whatever quarter they might come, to turn their faces to the *Haram*, or Holy Temple of Mecca. In order to silence heretics and revilers, whose objections had so teased and perplexed him at his outset, Mohammed resolved to interdict in future the presumption of doubting his mission, or disputing about his religion. Death was the award in the Koran for all who should dare to contradict or oppose any of the doctrines he taught. Fighting and not controversy was now to be the only legitimate mode of propagating the true faith; and its opponents, of whatever creed must either believe at the point of the lance, or redeem their lives by submitting to pay an annual tax for their infidelity.

The enthusiasm of the Arabs was thus doubly inflamed, by the hope of plunder and the promise of a sensual paradise. The decrees of an absolute fate, which would extinguish both industry and valour if men were left to the influence of a merely speculative belief, were dexterously turned into instruments for inspiring the disciples of the Koran with the most exalted and reckless courage. The companions of the Prophet advanced to battle without fear. As nothing was left to chance, there was no room for danger or dismay. The same inevitable destiny that might have ordained them to perish in their beds, would not overtake them a moment sooner on the field of death, or render their persons more insecure amid the arrows of the enemy. The lot of all was determined by a fixed and resistless predestination; with this difference, that while the man of peace departed obscure and inglorious, the fallen warrior had before his eyes the crown of martyrdom and the joys of paradise. "The sword," exclaimed the military apostle, "is the key of heaven and of hell! A drop of

blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months' fasting or prayer. Whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion, and odorous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim. The valiant martyrs of the faith were allowed to anticipate the voluptuous enjoyments of another world, by the license of embracing the female captives as their wives or concubines. The interval of the four sacred months, which had hitherto suspended the fury of the most hostile tribes, was disregarded, that no impediment might retard the victorious Moslems in their mighty career of pillage and proselytism. The distribution of the spoil was regulated by the authority of revelation. The whole plunder of the forage or the battle-field was to be collected in one common mass. A fifth part of the Prophet reserved to himself for charitable and pious uses; the remainder was to be divided among the soldiers, including those who guarded the camp as well as those who had been actually engaged. The portion of the slain devolved to their widows and orphans; and to encourage the increase of cavalry, each horseman was allotted a double share.

The hostile principles inculcated by the Koran did not long remain a dead or speculative precept. In the twelfth month after his settlement at Medina the despised and persecuted outcast of Mecca proclaimed a Holy War against the Koreish.* Various ambuscades were stationed to annoy their commerce, by seizing the caravans as they winded through the narrow defiles of the mountains. Parties of three or fourscore horsemen continued to reconnoitre month after month without gaining any important advantage. But the failure of these preliminary attempts

* Jannabi, cited by Gagnier, seems to hint that the Koreish were the first aggressors.—*La Vie de Mah.* tome ii. lib. iii. chap. 2.

was speedily redeemed by Mohammed himself on the plain of Bedr, one of the usual watering stations, about forty miles from Mecca. Spies had brought him intelligence that a caravan of the idolaters, consisting of about 1000 camels richly laden with grain, fruit, and other costly merchandise, was on its return from Syria, guarded with an escort of only thirty or forty men, commanded by Abu Sofian in person. Persuaded that this valuable and apparently easy prey was within his grasp, he resolved to advance at the head of a small detachment of troops to intercept it. This sacred band of warriors did not exceed 313 men, of whom seventy-seven were Mohajerins, and the rest chiefly Ansars. So poorly were they accommodated in regard to cavalry, that they could muster only two horses and seventy camels, which they mounted by turns. The plan of their future operations being decided, the leader of the faithful advanced, and pitched his tents at a short distance from the enemy. A slight intrenchment was thrown up to cover the flank of his troops; and for the safety of his own person, a temporary structure of wood, overshadowed with green boughs, was erected, with a fleet camel standing ready harnessed, that in case of defeat he might avoid the chance of being taken prisoner; for, however assured the Prophet might be of Divine assistance, he had too much sagacity to despise the use of human means. Burning with zeal and mutual hatred, the troops on both sides rushed furiously to the charge. The idolaters were three to one; but the superiority of numbers was overbalanced by the reckless intrepidity of fanaticism.

While the Moslems nobly sustained the assault of their adversaries, their commander fervently addressed Heaven in their behalf. Seated with Abu Beker in his wooden sanctuary, with his eye fixed on the field of battle: "Courage, my children, and fight like men!—close your ranks, discharge your arrows, and

and the day is your own. O God ! execute what thou hast promised :” alluding to the celestial reinforcement which he had demanded of Gabriel. In this manner he continued in great perturbation to wrestle with Providence till the mantle fell from his shoulders. Then starting as from a trance,—“Triumph, Abu Beker ! triumph ! behold the squadrons of Heaven flying to our aid !” It is not improbable he had observed his little army beginning to waver or give way, and adopted this pretext for rekindling their enthusiasm. At that decisive moment he mounted his horse, placed himself at their head, and in a few verses of the Koran announced the arrival of their celestial auxiliaries. The Mussulmans were inflamed with renewed ardour, and imagined that the heavenly militia were to fight their battles. The Koreish were dismayed and fled, leaving seventy of their warriors dead on the field, and seventy prisoners in the hands of the Faithful.

The glory of this first victory of the Moslems, the Koran has more than once piously attributed to the effect of Divine assistance. Their historians relate that the angelic chivalry, with Gabriel at their head, did frightful execution with their invisible swords on the terrified idolaters ; though we cannot help thinking a smaller number than 3,000 (others say 9,000) might have sufficed for the destruction of threescore and ten of the Koreish. Such stories must to us appear idle and ridiculous ; but they were the fuel with which Mohammed inflamed the martial enthusiasm of his army. It was by fostering the idea of God being their protector that he rendered them invincible ; and such was the empire he had obtained over their imaginations, that he found it his interest to attribute to miracles the remarkable success which arose from the blind fanaticism wherewith he had himself inspired them.

The capture of their last caravan had determined the Meccans,

in their next journey to Syria, to take the eastern route, through the desert, and along the borders of Irak. But it was in vain that their camels explored a new road. The banks of the Euphrates were not more secure than the shores of the Red Sea. The valiant Zaid, with a body of 500 horse, had orders to intercept and seize this wealthy prize; and so gallantly did he execute his commission, that he overtook the enemy at Al Karda, in the desert of Nejed; where, after defeating the escort, he made himself master of the entire caravan. The value of the plunder may be conjectured from the fact, that of the money alone the apostle's fifth amounted to 20,000 or 25,000 drachms.

These repeated losses filled the Koreish with shame and rage. The effusions of the muse were employed to stir up the passions of the indignant citizens. Caab, a Jew and an inveterate enemy of Mohammed, inveighed bitterly against him in satirical verses—an imprudence that cost him his life, as he was soon after assassinated by an emissary of the Prophet. The moment of excitement was favourable; and Abu Sufian speedily collected a body of 3,000 men, of whom 200 were cavalry, and 700 were armed with cuirasses or coats of mail. Their march was attended by his wife Henda and fifteen other matrons of the Koreish, carrying timbrels and acting the part of drummers. To animate the courage of the troops they sung the elegies of Caab, lamenting the disasters of Bedr, and exhorting their warriors to fight valiantly. They proceeded without meeting the least resistance, and encamped at a village within six miles of Medina.

Mohammed was apprized of their approach; but, as he could oppose them only with a very inferior force, he thought it more advisable to await their attack within the walls of the city, than hazard an engagement in the open plain. Most of the officers, however, espoused a contrary opinion, and demanded to be led to battle. After morning prayers, the army of the Believers

amounting to about 1,000 men, of whom 200 were cuirassiers, left the capital, and encamped on the base of Mount Ohud, at the distance of six miles to the northward. The dauntless apostle, though deserted by fifty of his followers, disposed of his troops to the best advantage. Having no cavalry,—for, except the horse on which he rode, there was not one in the whole army,—he posted fifty archers in the rear; fearing he might be surrounded by the enemy, who were at least three times his number. The cuirassiers he placed in the centre; and having made these dispositions, he ordered the whole line to await calmly the signal of attack. The archers, on whom chiefly the fortune of the day depended, he strictly commanded not to quit their position, even should the front give way. The Koreish drew up in form of a crescent; the centre commanded by Abu Sofian, and the right by the famous Khaled, the bravest and most successful of the Arabian generals. The rear-guard, or body of reserve, was under the surveillance of the heroic Henda and her matrons, who cheered the standard-bearers as they passed.

Both armies stood facing each other. At the word of attack, the Moslems fell upon the idolaters with a fury that nothing could withstand. The weight of the charge broke their centre, drove them down the hill, and might have secured to the Believers a bloodless victory, had they attended to the orders of their able commander. But the whole advantage was lost by the impatient rapacity of the archers. Elated at this first instance of success, and hurried away with the avidity of plunder, they abandoned the important station that had been assigned them. Their dispersion left the Mussulman army entirely unsupported, and destitute of its chief defence;—a circumstance which did not escape the practised eye of the intrepid Khaled. Seizing the favourable moment, he made a rapid wheel with his cavalry, and attacked the Moslems, flank and rear, with such bravery that

they were soon thrown into a state of complete disorder, and exposed to the carnage of a ruthless and vindictive foe. To terrify them still more, he raised the cry that Mohammed was slain. Courage and presence of mind forsook the believers. The rout became general; nor could the voice or example of the Prophet, who fought with desperate valour, rally for a moment his broken and discomfited troops. Surrounded with a few of his bravest soldiers, he contested the victory with a heroism worthy of a better cause. Firm and cool, he exposed his person freely wherever the danger appeared greatest. He was assailed by showers of stones, arrows, and javelins; and saw many of his gallant officers wounded by his side. When Mosaab fell dead at his feet, he seized the standard and planted it in the hand of Ali. The ferocious infidels had penetrated to the spot where he stood, encouraging his generous followers, who had formed a guard or rampart around him. In the tumult of the affray, he was struck from his horse, wounded and bleeding to the ground; his face was dangerously pierced by ten javelins, whose iron heads stuck in the wound; two of his teeth were beaten out; his lip cleft to the bone; and his life itself must have fallen a sacrifice had not Telha, nephew of Abu Beker, received a blow levelled at his master, which shattered his arm so as to deprive him of its use ever after. Yet, in the midst of confusion and dismay he calmly reproached the impious Otba for staining the visage of a prophet with blood, and blessed the friendly hand that stanch'd his wounds, and conveyed him to a place of safety.

Finding the rumour of his death a false alarm, Othman and a chosen body of adherents returned to the charge, and with the most determined valour succeeded in rescuing the apostle from his furious assailants, and bore him to a village in the neighbourhood, where he obtained the necessary refreshments of water and repose. The day was totally lost. The Moslems number-

ed seventy martyrs. At their head was the brave Hamza, who was secretly stabbed to the heart with a lance by a slave, in the commencement of the action, while fighting among the foremost. Abu Beker, Omar, and Othman were wounded. The assurance of paradise was the reward of the fallen ; while seventy-two prayers obtained for Hamza a place among the inhabitants of the seventh heaven, with the glorious title of the Lion of God.

The infidels remained masters of the field ; but the orderly retreat of the Moslems deterred them from attempting pursuit, or taking advantage of their success. They stripped the slain, committing on their senseless trunks the most revolting excesses of vengeance. Their noses and ears were cut off, and worn in triumph by the victors, as necklaces, bracelets, and belts. Hendia, recovered from her panic, with a barbarity rare even among savages, tore out the entrails of Hamza, gnawed his liver with her teeth, and swallowed part of the bloody morsel. Abu Sofian cut slices off his cheeks, and hoisted them on the end of a spear ; shouting praises to Hobal, their popular deity, and his victorious religion. This brutal exultation might satiate their fury, but it lost them the best fruits of the action. Instead of glutting their revenge by a useless cruelty, the Koreish might have followed up their success by marching on Medina, then in a state of weakness and mutiny, owing to a quarrel with the Jews. The pillage of that capital, the strongest motive in Arabian warfare, would have supplied them with fresh courage ; a few hours might have put an end to the rising empire of the apostle and the Koran, and again restored to the Kaaba the allegiance of its revolted worshippers.

This disaster threatened to annihilate the Prophet's reputation. With his usual confidence he had predicted the entire overthrow of the idolaters ; and presented one of his officers with a sword, on the blade of which " certain victory " was engraven. The

Moslems, unaccustomed to reverses, were greatly chagrined. Some murmured at the loss of their friends and relations; others expressed doubts as to his pretensions to the Divine favour; since, had he been a true apostle, Heaven, they said, would not have suffered the infidels to triumph over him in battle. To these objections Mohammed had a ready answer. The clamour, of those who were not altogether satisfied with the sublime doctrines of eternal fate and the felicities of martyrdom, he put to silence by throwing the whole blame and disgrace of the loss on their own sins.

Since the treaty of alliance between the Jews and Moslems, at their settlement in Medina, they had lived in peace and harmony, enjoying mutual liberty of conscience, and all the privileges of free citizens. An insult to an Arabian milkmaid interrupted this cordiality, and occasioned a war of extermination against the people of the synagogue. The tribe of Kainoka were driven into exile, and all their property confiscated. The Nadhirites possessed a strong fortress three miles from Medina. To this Mohammed laid siege, and for six days it maintained an obstinate defence; but seeing no prospect of assistance, while their palm-groves were laid in ashes, they agreed to capitulate on condition of marching out with their lives, and as much of their moveables as a single camel could export. The remainder of the spoil fell into the hands of the besiegers; and, contrary to express law, instead of a fifth, Mohammed appropriated the whole booty to himself, to be distributed at pleasure. This stratagem was an expedient to recompense the devoted fidelity of the Refugees, now become his favorite disciples. The policy was not without danger; but the fifty-ninth sura (the emigration) descended, expressly to ratify this monopoly, on the ground that neither horses nor camels were used in this expedition. Thus easily was Heaven made to contradict itself. One divine ora-

ele superseded the obligations of another, and cancelled the pretensions of the whole army, in order that their crafty general might discharge his debts of private gratitude.

The fifth year of the Hejira beheld the territory of Medina violated by an allied army of Jews and idolaters, and the city of the Prophet menaced with utter destruction. For this hostile movement the vigilant apostle was not unprepared; and by the advice of Salman the Persian, he caused, for the protection of the city, a deep ditch or intrenchment to be dug round it. The hearts of the believers quaked to behold their suburbs covered with tents, and bristling with a forest of moving spears; but their general, concealing his own apprehensions, loudly reproached them with their want of faith. After twenty days of ineffective blockade, and finding their prospects of success entirely frustrated by divisions in their own camp, the confederate forces broke up the siege, and prepared to return home. These dissensions, it is generally believed, were fomented by the emissaries of Mohammed, who had contrived to corrupt their leading men. The news of their precipitate departure was welcome intelligence to the Moslems, who commemorated this expedition as the War of the Ditch, or of the nations, in allusion to the different tribes of which the allied army was composed.

Relieved from their formidable assailants, the faithful expected to rest from their fatigues, and enjoy the blessings of peace in the bosom of their families. The intention of their leader was very different. On the same day, and without laying aside armour, Mohammed ordered his troops to march against the Koraidites, a Jewish tribe who had joined the confederates. The soldiers murmured: but it would have been impiety to disobey; for Gabriel is made to remonstrate with him for suffering his people to lay down their arms before the angels had laid down theirs. The Jews defended their fortress with valour, and during the

siege various battles were fought, distinguished by traits of individual heroism. After a brave resistance of twenty-five days, the garrison surrendered at discretion. Seven hundred of them were dragged in chains to the public market-place of Medina, where a pit was dug to serve as a common grave, into which they were precipitated one after another, before the bloody hand of the executioner had time to extinguish the vital spark. This butchery of his helpless enemies the victor beheld with an inflexible eye, and makes the Koran applaud the Divine goodness in giving him the lands of the slaughtered idolaters as an inheritance.

The sixth year of the Hejira was distinguished by no other military events than a series of petty excursions, which added considerably to the wealth of the believers, and ended in the subjugation of several tribes of the Arabs. Zaid undertook an expedition into the territory of Midian, the same pastoral tract where Moses kept the flocks of Jethro. The adventurers were rewarded by a very considerable booty; besides a great number of women and children, whom they sold for slaves. Hitherto it had been customary in this inhuman traffic to dispose separately of mothers and children; but on this occasion, the cries and wailings of the female captives were so distressing, that the apostle produced a revelation prohibiting children of a tender age to be sold, except conjointly with the mother.

Successful in war, and enriched by conquest, Mohammed saw himself not only at the head of a religious sect, but the sovereign of a petty kingdom. One acquisition yet remained without which his authority, whether secular or sacred, could never be said to rest on a solid foundation. Mecca, the ancient and venerable sanctuary of Arabian worship, though he had granted protection to its commerce by an order to allow the caravans to pass unmolested, was still in the hands of his enemies, and a stranger to the true

religion. To revisit the city and the temple from which he had been driven as a seditious outcast, and to which his followers still looked with a longing affection, was the cherished object of his fondest hopes; and the apostle imagined the time had arrived when he could gratify the devotion of his subjects; for such was the pretext under which he covered his design to surprise the capital of the Koreish. The Mussulmans were transported with delight; the holy banner was unfurled, and the most splendid preparations made for this famous expedition. Fourteen hundred of his bravest troops attended his march, ostensibly to protect him from insult or opposition. Seventy camels, adorned with garlands of flowers and leaves, the victims destined for sacrifice, advanced in front of the army.

This religious pageant did not, however, impose upon the inhabitants, who distrusted the intentions of an ambitious fanatic, veiled as they were under the humble garb of piety. Notwithstanding his declarations of peace, and of his extreme veneration for their temple, the Meccans informed him that if he entered their city it must be by force. "The Koreish," said Arwa, one of the deputies who had discoursed familiarly with the Prophet, "have put on their tiger-skins, and vowed resistance in the face of heaven." Mohammed sought a pretext for war and vengeance; and the conduct of his enemies in violating the law of nations, by siezing the person of Othman his ambassador, gave him the advantage of having the appearance of justice and right on his side. But neither party seemed disposed to appeal to the sword.

The Koreish foresaw the danger of wantonly provoking hostilities. They restored Othman to liberty, and sent a commissioned agent, Sohail, to propose conditions of peace. The preliminary words of the treaty were offensive to the idolaters; and in consenting to waive his usual title, Mohammed displayed weak-

ness rather than policy. "In the name of God and his apostle," was the formula with which Ali commenced. Sahil remonstrated: "Had we acknowledged you to be the apostle of God," said he, "we had offered you no resistance." Ali was requested to efface the obnoxious words, and substitute, "the son of Abdallah." "No, by God!" cried this first of believers, "I shall never obliterate that glorious title. How should I be guilty of such profanation?" The Prophet, less scrupulous, with his own hand (and the assistance of a miracle) removed the objection, by writing his simple designation.

The conclusion of this truce filled the Mussulmans with shame and sorrow. They had left Medina on the faith of assured victory, and compassing the sacred enclosure of the temple; but, instead of triumph, their visit had ended in an ignominious peace. They could not conceal their chagrin, and for the first time the voice of their chief was disregarded. Part of the plain on which they were encamped lay within the sacred territory, and the apostle, willing to cover this disgrace with the solemnity of a pilgrimage, ordered his companions to slay their victims. The command was heard in mournful silence, and disobeyed. Three times the order was repeated, but the Moslems remained immovable. The same presence of mind that had extricated him from other difficulties, did not fail him in this. Passing along the ranks without uttering a word, he seized the first camel, and with his own hand performed the rite of immolation. The force of example overcame their obstinacy. In an instant every victim was sacrificed, and every soldier occupied in the religious duties of shaving and purification, with a zeal and rivalry altogether marvellous. Their melancholy was entirely dissipated and harmony restored, by the descent of a new revelation which assured them of speedy victory, though in the present enterprise they had anticipated the promised success.

The Jews were the doomed victims on which the fury of the rapacious believers was again to be let loose. Though weakened by exile and confiscation, several places of strength remained in their possession. With a body of 1,400 infantry, and 200 horse, he directed his march to Khaibar, a fortress of prodigious strength distant six days' journey to the north-east of Medina. and the capital of the Jewish Arabs. It was protected by eight castles, some of which were deemed impregnable. The besiegers opened their trenches; but all their assaults were vigorously repulsed. The gallant behaviour on both sides protracted the siege to a considerable length; and the Prophet was finally compelled to sound a retreat, in order to give his troops a few days' relaxation.

This interval was signalized by some remarkable traits of individual courage. Abu Beker and Omar had successively mounted the breach, with a chosen detachment; but were forced to retire amid a shower of darts and arrows. The standard was committed to Ali, who fought with a valour more than human. In single combat he encountered Marhab, a gigantic Hebrew, governor of the castle, a man of prodigious strength and ferocity; and with a blow of his resistless sabre, called the piercer, he cleft him to the teeth, though his head was defended by a ponderous helmet, lined with a double turban. In the fray, the lance of his antagonist had struck his buckler to the ground; but the undaunted Mussulman supplied its place, by tearing from its hinges a gate of the fortress, which he wielded in his left hand during the whole assault, though the strength of eight men was found unable to move it from the spot where it lay. Such at least is the declaration of Abu Rafe, whose zeal for his master's glory, we cannot help thinking, has in this exploit rather over-stepped even the modesty of romance. The fall of their champion dispirited the Jews; they fled in dismay to their castle, pursued by the victo-

tious Moslems, who entered with the fugitives, and took possession of the fort.

This important conquest was followed by the surrender of the other castles; and lastly by the town of Khaibar itself, which being now destitute of its chief supports, was obliged at the end of ten days to capitulate. The conditions were humane, but mercenary; the inhabitants being permitted to cultivate their lands and vineyards as formerly, one-half of the future produce and of their present effects being awarded to the Mussulmans. This grant was coupled with a despotic restriction, that they held their possessions entirely at the will of the conqueror, who might expel them at his pleasure. Under these severe stipulations, the Jews continued to possess their castles and territories undisputed till the reign of Omar, who transplanted them to Syria; alleging the dying injunction of the apostle, that one religion only should be tolerated in his native land of Arabia.*

One event connected with this siege still remains to be noticed—an attempt to poison the apostle while supping in the fortress with his chiefs on a shoulder of roasted mutton. A single mouthful was sufficient to detect the fraud; but Bashar, one of his companions, having eaten heartily, was instantly seized with convulsions, and expired on the spot. The Arabs pretend that the mutton spoke and informed Mohammed of its being poisoned; this intelligence unfortunately came too late; for, notwithstanding the promptitude with which he rejected the deleterious morsel, he was persuaded till death that the malign influence had penetrated his

* According to Niebuhr, the Karaite Jews in his time, were in possession of Khaibar, where they lived independent under their own sheiks.—*Descrip. de l'Arabie*, p. 326. Burckhardt informs us that the Jewish colony once settled at Khaibar has wholly disappeared; nor are there any Jews in the northern part of the Arabian Desert. There are descendants of the Karaites still at Sanaa in Yemen. The Arabs of Khaibar are of a darker complexion than the neighbouring Bedouins.—*Travels in Arabia*, App. No. vi. p. 464.

system, and abridged his days. Revenge was the origin of this conspiracy; and the pretext, an experiment to try the reality of his apostleship. The perpetrator was Zainab, the sister of Marhab, who fell by the hand of Ali. "Had you been a true prophet," said the heroic Jewess, when asked the motives of her criminal intent, "the poison was harmless, as it must have been easily discovered; if not, it would have freed the world of a tyrant!"

Crowned with spoils and honours, the Prophet entered Medina in triumph. Confirmed in his kingly authority over his own subjects, he now assumed the insignia of royalty, and the prerogatives of an independent sovereign, in despatching agents and embassies to foreign courts to treat on matters of commerce, and especially to open their eyes to the precious benefits of becoming his disciples. Princes were not to be addressed in the ordinary style of epistolary correspondence; and Mohammed caused a silver seal to be made, on which was engraven, in three lines, *MOHAMMED THE APOSTLE OF GOD*. The vanity of his chiefs was flattered at the idea of becoming ambassadors; and seven of the neighbouring potentates, in the following order,—the King of Persia, the Emperor of the Greeks, the Governor of Egypt, the Nayash of Abyssinia, the King of Gassan, the Prince of Yemama, and the King of Bahrein, or Hira, were honored with an apostolical invitation to embrace the faith of Islam. But the diplomatic missionaries were less successful with strangers than with the Arabs, who cherished a national reverence for the religion of Ishmael. The haughty Kheosroo tore the letter in pieces, because the name of "his slave," Mohammed, on the superscription, took precedence of his own. From the Emperor Heraclius, if we may believe the Mussulman writers, the sacred messenger had a more kindly reception; for they assure us, it was only the fear of losing his crown that prevented

him from making an open profession of his belief in the Koran.*

With the functions of temporal sovereignty Mohammed conjoined that of chief priest or pontiff. During his life, he was himself the only minister and expounder of his religion. At first, such was the rude simplicity of the age, he used to preach in the mosque at Medina leaning upon a post, the trunk of a palm-tree driven into the ground. Accessions of power and magnificence required more appropriate accommodation; and at length he consented to have a stair or pulpit made, three steps in height,—the uppermost of which was occupied by himself; Abu Beker being seated on the second step; and Omar on the third, with his feet resting on the ground. Tradition asserts, that the first time the Prophet ascended the new rostrum, a dismal sound, like the lowing of a camel, issued from the deserted beam, expressive of grief and regret; and that the sympathizing apostle, caressing the disconsolate trunk in the most endearing language, restored it to good humour, and impressed it with a conviction of the propriety of their separation.

Nothing could exceed the respect and veneration in which Mohammed was held by his devoted followers. His wishes were anticipated, his words and looks watched with the utmost attention. Every hair that dropped on the ground was gathered with superstitious care. His spittle was eagerly caught and preserved; and the water in which he had made his ablutions, as if it inherited a sacred virtue from his touch. The ceremonious expressions of allegiance, the formal servility of courts, are cold when compared with this fervour of a blind enthusiasm. "I have seen," said Arwa, the deputy of Mecca, who had contemplated the Moslem camp with leisurely astonishment, "the

* If we may credit Zonares and other Greek writers, Mohammed had a personal interview with Heraclius, who was then at Emesa, on his return from his Persian expedition, and ceded to him such territory in Syria.—*Memoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tome 52. *Gugnier*, lib. v. chap. 4. *Abulfeda*, cap. 46.

Khoosroos of Persia and the Cæsars of Rome in all their glory ; but never did I behold a king among his subjects like Mohammed in the midst of his companions."

The eighth year of the Hejira was fortunate in the spontaneous conversion of three renowned proselytes, Othman, Khaled, and Amru, who most seasonably abandoned the sinking cause of idolatry. Othman was prefect or keeper of the temple, and the two others the future conquerors of Syria and Egypt. This same period was rendered memorable by the battle of Muta, the first in which the Moslems tried their swords against the disciplined valour of the Greeks. The apostle had sent an ambassador to the viceroy of Bosra, offering him as he had done to others the assurance of salvation on exchanging Christianity for the Koran ; but the sacred messenger, while reposing in peace and security, was assassinated by the governor of Muta, a place opposite the town of Kerek, on the borders of Syria. This small spark kindled a vast conflagration, which overspread the East, and raged between the two nations for 800 years. An army of 3,000 chosen troops, under the command of Zaid, was ordered to advance ; and, on the spot where the guilty deed had been committed, to inflict on the perpetrator the chastisement of a just retribution. The burning sands of the desert were crossed by rapid and fatiguing marches ; but the Christians were not to be taken by surprise. A prodigious force of 100,000 men composed of Greeks and auxiliary Arabs, was assembled. The Moslems hesitated whether to give battle or wait for reinforcements. "Friends," cried their chief, "let us cut our way to paradise through the ranks of the enemy. We have no alternative but martyrdom or victory !"

Fanaticism is blind to danger ; and in spite of this vast disproportion of numbers, the believers flew to the attack, resolved to conquer or die. Seven years of triumph had inspired them

with confidence in their good fortune, and a successful valour had made them invincible. The combat was long and bloody. Zaid fell among the foremost, covered with wounds and glory. The standard of Islam as the Prophet had directed was transferred to Jafar, brother of Ali, who more than sustained the fame of his country. When his right hand was struck off, he placed the sacred banner in his left; and when that too, was dismembered, he seized it between his bleeding stumps, and held it to his breast, though pierced with fifty wounds, till the blow of a Roman sabre cleft his head in twain. Abdallah, the third in command, met with the same fate; which so dispirited the hearts of the Mussulmans that they turned their backs for inglorious flight. At this crisis the intrepid Khaled raised the fallen standard, and succeeded in rallying the fugitives, who returned to the charge with redoubled fury. The centre of the enemy's line was broken, and thrown into complete disorder; the rout became general, and a terrible slaughter must have ensued had not darkness favoured their retreat. In a nocturnal council, the command was unanimously devolved on Khaled, who remained with his troops all night on the field of battle. No plunder had yet rewarded the bravery of the soldiers; but early next morning their new general, by a skilful manœuvre in deploying his ranks so as to magnify their numbers, contrived to spread a false apprehension among the vanquished Greeks, who fled with precipitation, leaving their camp, with the baggage and abundance of rich spoil, in the possession of the victors. This brilliant achievement added fresh laurels to the renown of Khaled. The Prophet bestowed on him the title of the Sword of God. To the science of an able captain he joined the most heroic personal courage; and during the battle, nine swords had broken in his hand.

The Greek writers speak less pompously of the battle of Muta

than the romantic Arabs, and represent it as an action of no great importance to either side ; but they seem to corroborate the leading fact that victory declared for the Moslems, who lost three emirs ; * though their description of the imperial army, as "a body of troops hastily drawn together," would lead us to doubt of its numerical strength.

Two of the ten years' truce with the Meccans had scarcely elapsed when Mohammed accused them of a breach of their engagement. When a cause of quarrel is sought it is easy to find a pretext ; but the truth is, that the condition of the contracting powers had somewhat changed. While his enemies were weakened by desertion and conquest, he had gained strength by the seduction or submission of various petty tribes. The opportunity was too favourable to be lost, as he had secretly determined to humble the pride of the idolaters and get possession of his native city. An army of 10,000 was ready to obey his will. Enthusiasm and revenge impelled their march ; and, notwithstanding several attempts to give the enemy intimation, so completely were their movements concealed, that the Meccans were only apprized of their arrival by the blaze of 10,000 fires within four parasangs of the city. Leaving Omar in charge of the camp to intercept all spies and communications, the Prophet advanced his army in four detachments to invest the town on every side. The left wing was conducted by Ali with the great standard of Islam at its head, and the right by Khaled ; while he himself, mounted on his camel and clothed in a scarlet robe, took the rear, and expressly prohibited his generals from committing violence except in cases of defence.

The inhabitants were in a state of great consternation, but it was too late to offer effective resistance. Abu Sofian and two of

* Georgius Cedrenus (Historiar. Comp. p. 429), Theophanes (Chronograph. p. 278, mention the loss of three Arabian emirs, and the escape of Khaled.

the chiefs had fallen into the hands of Omar : to save their heads they swore fealty to Mohammed, not without suspicion of treachery.* The Moslem troops met with no opposition, and three divisions, without striking a blow, marched peaceably into the city just as the morning sun was appearing above the horizon. Khaled alone encountered a large body of the enemy, who disputed his passage through the plain with a shower of arrows ; but, after a sharp conflict, they were speedily dispersed. Ignorantly or purposely disregarding the prohibition of the Prophet as to the effusion of blood, the furious chief pursued the fugitives into the heart of the town ; massacring all that came in his way in the streets and public squares as far as the gate of the temple, where vast multitudes had taken shelter. Seventy are said to have fallen by his own hand, numbers sought the protection of their houses, while many fled to the hills to escape the carnage of the merciless barbarian.

The apostle himself, having caused the troops to desist from slaughter, entered not with military triumph, but in the humble guise of a pilgrim, with a black turban, and the ihram or sacred habit, repeating aloud the 48th chapter of the Koran. He rode a white camel, and was attended by a body-guard of his principal officers. Seven times he went in procession round the Kaaba, each time touching the black stone with the end of his cane in profound reverence ; he then made his devotional inclinations, drank copiously of the Zemzem, and performed his sacred lustrations in a pail of that holy water ; the rest of the Believers observing the same solemnities. The idols, the object of his earliest and strongest indignation, were now within his reach, and

* M. de Brequigny, in his excellent Dissertation (*Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions*, tome xxii.), conjectures that a secret treaty had been concocted between Mohammed and Abu Sofian at Medina, the preceding year. The marriage of the Prophet with his daughter Hatiba, and the liberal share of spoil which he conferred on him and his two sons after the battle of Honain, certainly confirm the suspicion.

everywhere presenting their hideous forms before his eyes. With his staff he struck a wooden pigeon to the ground, and broke it to pieces; and touching with the same implement all the images within the enclosure, he gave the signal for their demolition. "Curse your idolatries! what have our pious forefathers, mortals like ourselves, to do with your sorceries and your sacrilegious worship?" And instantly Abraham and Ishmael were dragged from their pedestals. Hobal, with his hoary beard and his divin-
ing arrows, was laid prostrate. Mounted on the shoulders of the Prophet, Ali pulled down the idol of the Khozaites from the top of the Caaba. Saints and angels, male and female, with the whole fantastic group of heathen divinities, were ignominiously swept from the place in one common ruin, until the pride of ancient paganism was brought low, and the temple cleansed from the accumulated vanities of 2,000 years. Over the wrecks of their shattered deities the victor harangued the trembling idolaters on the folly of their senseless adorations; recommended them to believe in one God; and pointed to his victories as a triumphant proof of his claims to the prophetic character.

The laws of conquest gave him the right to make the citizens his slaves; but his anger was directed more against the idols than the inhabitants of the country; and instead of indulging in a cruel retaliation, the generous exile forgave the guilt and appeased the factions of Mecca by restoring its political rights and sacred privileges. Intertest more than clemency might dictate this compromise, for the people merited their freedom by submitting to his authority and professing his religion; and when the chiefs of the Koreish were summoned to his presence, and humbly demanded his mercy,—
What treatment but chains and ~~bandage~~ bandage can you expect from the man you have wronged, and whom God has made your master?"—"That of a brother and a kinsman," said the suppliants. "Go, then; you are safe,—

you are free. The only exception to this general amnesty was the execution of four criminals, who had rendered themselves personally obnoxious to the conqueror.

The whole inhabitants, male and female, with the haughty Abu Sofian and the ferocious Henda at their head, took the path of fidelity and allegiance ; and thus within eight years after his banishment the orphan son of Abdallah was enthroned as prince and prophet of his native city. Mecca was henceforth declared an inviolable sanctuary, where it was unlawful to commit bloodshed or cut down a tree. Its temple, instead of the promiscuous homage that formerly disgraced it, was to be shut for ever except to the partisans of the Koran ; and a perpetual law was enacted, that no unbeliever should dare, under pain of death, to set his foot within the *haram*, or holy territory.

Fifteen days were spent in regulating the affairs of the Meccan government, and planning military expeditions for the further destruction of idolatry, which had several strongholds in other parts of Arabia. The suburban divinities were hurled in contempt from the neighbouring hills. But, while crowds of terrified image-worshippers were making their submission, an obstinate remnant had resolved to maintain their ancient liberties against the arms and the eloquence of the Prophet. The tribes of Hawazan and Thakif, with their allies the revolted Saadites, had assembled a force of 4,000 men under the command of Malec, for the protection of their gods ; and having posted themselves at Hozain near Taif, were determined to intercept the Moslem army on its return from Mecca. At the head of 12,000 brave troops Mohammed reached the vally towards evening, and found the enemy drawn up in order of battle, a narrow mountainous defile lying between them. Before sunrise he had made the requisite disposition for attack, displaying with secret pride the banners

of Mecca and Medina; the latter of which was followed by 10,000 and the other by 2,000 warriors.

The general of the enemy, profiting by his advantageous situation, had contrived to supply by stratagem what he wanted in strength. An unexpected attack threw the ranks of the believers into complete disorder. They fled with the utmost precipitation, and a moment of panic had well-nigh lost the fruits of fifty battles. The Prophet himself, with ten of his faithful companions, were all that kept the field. Stung with shame and disappointment, he attempted to spur his mule into the thickest of the enemy in search of an honourable death, but his brave comrades interposed, three of whom fell and expired at his side. While the valley resounded with the bitter lamentations of their general, the flying battalions were persuaded to return, and the combat was renewed with fresh vigour. "The furnace is again rekindled!" observed the delighted apostle; and throwing a handful of dust to encourage his soldiers, he soon beheld the tide of victory change in his favour. The infuriated troops, with the imaginary aid of 16,000 angels, inflicted a merciless revenge on the authors of their disgrace.

Malec, with the wreck of his army, had retired to Taif and shut himself up in that fortress, resolved to defend it to the last extremity. This was a place of too great importance to remain in the hands of an enemy; and from the vale of Honain, Mohammed marched without delay to put an end to the War of Idolatry by effecting its reduction. Twenty days were wasted in useless operations, and with reluctance he saw himself compelled to raise the siege; but he retreated with an idle threat to return, exhorting companions to trust in his never-failing source of angelic assistance. A voluntary submission, however, rendered a second attempt unnecessary. The terrified Thakifites expressed their readiness to profess Islam on condition that their goddess,

Al-Lattah, was preserved for three years, and themselves exempted from the obligation of prayer. But the Prophet was inexorable. Religion without prayer, he told them, was worthless; and as for their idolatry, he could not tolerate it for an hour.

The booty which this expedition placed at his disposal amounted to 6000 captives, 24,000 camels, 40,000 sheep, and 5,000 ounces of silver. A halt of thirteen days was employed in distributing the plunder, for the impatience of his soldiers could no longer be restrained. Instead of reproaching the Koraish for their disaffection at Honain, he endeavoured to secure their attachment and silence their calumnies by a superior measure of liberality. Abu-Sofan alone was presented with 300 camels and twenty bunces of silver, — a suspicion, had there been no other, of his private instrumentality to the conquest of Mecca. The same munificence was extended to his two sons and all the other chiefs of distinction, and the wavering faith of the new proselytes was confirmed by the lucrative religion of the Koraish. Various gratuities were dispensed to several strangers belonging to other Arab tribes; and to conciliate the affections of the avaricious troops who were deprived of their prisoners, Mohammed was content to resign his fifth of the plunder, and wished, for their sake, that the cattle he had to bestow were as numerous as the trees in the province of Tehama.* The submission of the Koraish, to whom all Arabia looked with veneration as the genuine descendants of Ishmael, was a signal to those tribes who still remained hostile, that resistance was useless. Most of them offered their voluntary homage, and the more refractory were glad to preserve their lives and effects by yielding a reluctant allegiance.

The sceptre of Mohammed was triumphant, and all the petty

* A difficulty with regard to married captives had startled the conscientious Moslems; but the Arabian custom was solved by the Koraish, which pronounced it lawful for believers to make concubines of the wives of infidel husbands. — *Bagdader, 4th. ed. chap. 56.*

chiefs from the shores of the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, acknowledged his regal and priestly supremacy. His arms were now powerful enough to attempt foreign conquests; and cope with the strength of neighbouring empires. The wealth and fertility of Syria had attracted his cupidity; and, under pretence of anticipating the warlike preparations of Heraclius, he resolved to march without delay into that province. An army of 30,000 troops was assembled, and a holy war solemnly proclaimed against the Romans. The harassed Moslems entered on this expedition with reluctance. It was the season of harvest, and a time of scarcity, when their labour was imperiously demanded in collecting their vintage. But in vain did they beg a dispensation, and urge their different excuses,—the want of money, horses, and provisions,—their ripe fruits, and the scorching heat of summer. “Hell is much hotter!” said the indignant apostle; and without concealing from them the fatigues and obstacles they must surmount, he proceeded with determined intrepidity in the execution of his plan.

Painful and weary was the march of the distressed army. Ten men rode by turns on the same camel; and though the historians of this campaign have invented a copious shower in reply to the Prophet’s supplications, the exhausted soldiers were reduced to the necessity of drinking the water from the belly of that useful animal. After ten days’ journey in a burning desert, the Believers reposed by the waters and palm-groves of Tabuc, a town lying midway between Medina and Damascus. While encamped here, Mohammed was informed that the Roman army had retired, which put a stop to the prosecution of the war. The terror of his approach is ascribed as the cause of their sudden retreat; but though the valiant Arab declared himself satisfied with their peaceful intentions, it is more than probable that in the languid and discontented state of his own troops he declined to hazard

his fame and his fortunes against the martial array of the Emperor of the East. An interval of twenty days was employed in subduing or receiving the allegiance of the neighbouring chiefs. Most of them being Christians were allowed, on the terms of an annual tribute the security of their persons, the property of their goods, the freedom of their trade, and the toleration of their worship. Among the petty princes that offered their personal obeisance at the camp of Tabuc was John, the Christian governor of Ailah, who compounded for liberty of conscience and protection to himself and his subjects by the yearly payment of 3,000 pieces of gold. As a mark of his favour, the Prophet complimented him with a rich cloak or mantle, which descended to the caliphs, and is said to have been kept with religious care on account of its great virtue in curing diseases, until it fell into the hands of the Turkish sultan, Morad Khan, who ordered the precious relic to be enclosed in a chest of gold.*

Peace and submission reigned in Arabia, which now presented the singular spectacle of unity in faith and government. The five kings in Yemen had confessed that their eyes were opened to the true light, and consented to hold their crowns under the jurisdiction of the Moslem vicegerents. Ali continued at the head of an army to preach Islam to these happy regions; the inhabitants contributing with their own hands to the demolition of their altars and their gods. The next two years of the Hejira were allotted to the final adjustment of certain religious mat-

* The substance of this instrument, the *Diploma Securitatis Ailensis*, is to be found in Abulfeda (Vita, l'up. lvii. p. 195); Gagnier (La Vie, lib. vi. chap. xi); and Savary (Abrégé de la Vie, p. 195). It was published in Arabic and Latin by Gabriel Sionith, at Paris, in 1630. Bayle (Dict. art. Mahom.) Renssodot (Hist. Patriarch. Alexand. p. 169), and Abulfarage (Asseman. Biblioth. Orient.) admit its authenticity. Grolius and Hottinger (Hist. Orient. p. 237) doubt it; and Mosheim gives into the opinion that it was a forgery of the Syrian and Arabian monks, to mitigate the severities of the Saracens.—*Ecclesiast. Hist. Gen.* vii. part. ii. chap. 5. To the possession of the mantle in question, the Turks used to attribute the success of their arms; and believed that they owed their prosperity and the cure of all their maladies to their drinking the water in which it had been dipped.—Savary, note, p. 107.

ters, and the reception of deputies and orators who flocked from all quarters to the court of Medina. While his lieutenants were thus saluted with respect in every province between the Indian and Mediterranean Seas, the ambassadors who knelt before the throne of the Prophet "outnumbered the dates that fall from the palm-tree in its maturity." They were received with condescension and kindness; and the year of embassies, the ninth of the Hejira, proclaimed the extraordinary concourse which the fate of Mecca had attracted to acknowledge the power or supplicate the protection of the conqueror.

Various arrangements were put in operation to consolidate the strength of the infant monarchy. Officers were appointed to collect and superintend the ecclesiastical revenues; and the opprobrious name of tribute was exchanged for that of alms or oblations for the service of religion. All former edicts or treaties implying liberty, or exemptions in favour of infidels, were revoked. Some rites in the great annual solemnity were altered; the ihram was declared the essential dress of all pilgrims in future; and the indecent custom, which had prevailed in the Times of Ignorance, of performing the seven circuits naked was abolished. To give the sanction of his own example, and furnish a model to the faithful in all succeeding ages for the exact and acceptable discharge of this ceremony, Mohammed determined to make a valedictory or farewell pilgrimage. The piety of the Moslem world was kindled, and a flock of 114,000 obsequious devotees accompanied his journey. His camp included all his wives, who, riding on camels, were enclosed within pavilions of embroidered silk; and was followed by an immense number of victims for sacrifice, crowned with garlands of flowers. Every spot where he halted and said his prayers became consecrated; and the manner in which he executed the various rites, from the cutting of his hair and nails to the solemn act of throwing stones at the

devil, is still religiously observed by the hajjis of the present day.

The general tranquillity was at this time interrupted, but not endangered, by the rash pretensions of one or two adventurers whom the success of Mohammed had tempted to become his rivals. Moseilama, prince of Yemama, had made his submission, and professed the Moslem religion among the host of ambassadors that flocked to Medina. Sovereign of a considerable province, and beloved by his subjects, he conceived the project of commencing apostle on his own account ; and scarcely had he returned to his capital when he renounced Islam, and began to assume the ensigns and prerogatives of a Divine messenger. Affecting to be equal in honour and dignity with the Prophet, he wrote him an epistle, modestly proposing that the earth should be divided between Moseilama and Mohammed, the two "apostles of God." The latter was too well confirmed in his empire to need an associate, or tolerate this "piece of unparelled impudence." "Let Moseilama, the liar, know," was the reply, "that the earth belongs to the Lord, who will give the victory to his true servant."

Until his sixth-third year, Mohammed sustained, with unabated vigour, the temporal and spiritual fatigues of his mission. The infirmities of age had not impaired his constitution, though his health had suffered a gradual decline. His mortal disease was a fever, of which he was seized in the house of Zainab, one of his wives, while giving directions to Osama to lead an expedition into Palestine to avenge the death of Zaid, who had earned the crown of martyrdom at the battle of Muta. Finding his malady increase, he requested to be conveyed to the mansion of his favourite Ayesha, whose tenderness might sooth his last moments. To her he expressed his serious conviction that he owed the cause of his distemper to the poisoned mutton at

Khaibar. For three days he suffered the tortures of an intense and insupportable heat, which deprived him at intervals of the use of reason. This paroxysm was succeeded by a more favourable crisis, and he recovered so far as to officiate at prayers in the mosque. His audience were edified by a penitential acknowledgment of his willingness to make restitution to such as he might have unconsciously wronged. "If there be any man whom I have unjustly scourged, I offer my back to the lash of retaliation. If I have aspersed his reputation, let him proclaim my faults. If I have taken his money, or despoiled him of his goods, I am ready to give the little I possess to compensate his loss. Let my accuser make his demand; it is not my disposition to resent the claims of justice."—"Yes," exclaimed a voice from the crowd, "you owe me three drachms of silver." Mohammed immediately discharged the debt, and thanked his creditor for accusing him in this world rather than at the day of judgment.

To his latest hour, and amid sorrow and suffering, he continued to act the character of the prophet; evincing at the closing scene of mortality the same remarkable fortitude and presence of mind that he had displayed on the field of battle. In one instance only did the violence of disease betray his wandering faculties into a momentary illusion, when he called for pen and ink, that he might write a book for the better instruction of his followers, and to consummate the work of revelation. The proposal was startling, and met with opposition, as the Koran was deemed sufficient; the chamber of sickness was disturbed by an unseasonable dispute, until the dying Prophet was forced to reprimand the indecent vehemence of his disciples. Unwilling that his attendants should witness the recurrence of his infirmities, he ordered all persons to be excluded from his apartment;

and the last three days of his existence were spent in the exclusive society of Ayesha.

Tradition, which disfigured his life with romances, has left us to contemplate the circumstance of his death through a cloud of superstitious incense. If we are to place the slightest credit on the evidence of his only companion, he received more incontrovertible proofs to establish the truth of his mission at its termination than in any former period. Gabriel made regular visits of condolence and inquiry after his health. The angel of death was not permitted to separate his soul from his body till he had respectfully solicited permission to enter the chamber. The request was granted, and the last office performed with all the deference of a servant to the command of his master. When the moment of his departure approached, his head was reclined on the lap of Ayesha; he fainted in the agony of pain, but recovering his spirits, and raising his eyes with a steady look towards the roof on the apartment, he uttered with a faltering voice the following broken and scarcely articulate expressions:—"O God!—pardon me—have pity—Yes,—receive me—among my fellow-citizens on high!" and immediately expired on a carpet spread on the floor. The particular year of his death has been disputed; but the best authors fix it to the 12th of Rebiah I., in the eleventh year of the Hejira, corresponding to the 17th of June A. D. 632.

The melancholy intelligence spread rapidly through the city. The frantic populace would not be convinced that they had been deprived of their apostle. They rushed with credulous dismay to the house of mourning. Disregarding the evidence of his senses, Omar unsheathed his scimitar, threatening to strike off the heads of the infidels who should dare to assert that their master was no more. A scene of tumult and confusion ensued, which retarded the interment for some days. The

ferment was at length appeased by Al Abbas and Abu Beker, who produced the testimony of reason, and a text of Koran, that the Prophet had actually tasted of death.

New disputes arose as to the place of sepulture; Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem being each suggested by the contending parties. A saying ascribed to Mohammed decided the point: "That a prophet ought to be buried on the spot where he dies." A grave was dug, and the coffin deposited in a vault paved with bricks, beneath the floor of the apartment where he had breathed his last; and to this day the innumerable pilgrims of Mecca often turn aside from the road, to bow in voluntary devotion before the simple tomb of the Prophet. The multifarious duties of the hajji who performs this expedition—his ejaculations on perceiving the distant trees and spires—his alms, perfumes, and prostrations—his prayers and postures within the sacred enclosure of the mosque where the sepulchre stands, are copiously described by the Mussulman doctors.

For the personal appearance and private life of the apostle, we must rely on the Arabian writers, who dwell with fond and proud satisfaction on the graces and intellectual gifts with which nature had endowed him. He was of a middle stature, of a clear fair skin, and ruddy complexion. His head and features, though large were well proportioned; he had a prominent forehead, large dark-brown eyes, and aquiline nose, and a thick bushy beard. His mouth, though rather wide, was handsomly formed and adorned with teeth white as pearls, the upper row not closely set, but in regular order; which appeared when he smiled, and gave an agreeable expression to his countenance. He had a quick ear, and a fine sonorous voice. His dark eyebrows approached each other without meeting. His hair fell partly in tinguets about his temples, and partly hung down between his shoulders; to prevent whiteness, the supposed effect of Satanic

Influence, he stained it, as the Arabs often do still, of a shining reddish colour. His frame was muscular and compact, robust rather than corpulent. When he walked he carried a staff, in imitation of the other prophets, and had a singular affectation of being thought to resemble Abraham. The assertion of the Greeks and Christians that he was subject to epilepsy must be ascribed to ignorance or malice.

The flattery or the superstitious veneration of his followers has created several attributes that are either fictitious or impossible ; we shall therefore leave out of our portrait the sweetness and nutritive qualities of his spittle—the faculty of vision from behind—his miraculous exemption from vermin, which would neither touch his garments nor taste his blood—the odorous exhalations of his armpits—and the delicious perfumes that exuded from his body like drops of liquid coral. We must also pass in silence his miraculous skill in the sciences ; his arsenal and wardrobe, with his two black and white standards, called the Eagle and the Sun ; his horses, mules, asses, camels, sheep, goats, and other bestial, of which many remarkable anecdotes are related in oriental authors.

The private and moral character of Mohammed was checkered by a strangely inconsistent mixture of virtue and vice, of dignity and condescension. Though vested with the power and ensigns of royalty, he despised its pomp, and was careless of its luxuries. The familiarity which gained the hearts of the nobles, and endeared him to his companions, was extended to the meanest of the people, whose wishes and complaints he always listened to with patience. He even entertained them occasionally at his table, or shared with them their homely meal while seated on benches around the mosque. When not occupied in matters of graver importance, he threw aside the forms and restraints of official etiquette, and condescended to partake in the amusements or jocular

conversation of his friends. At the head of his army he could maintain the stateliness and cold taciturnity of Wellington or Bonaparte; with his soldiers he could relax without losing his authority, mixing in their pastimes and pleasantries with that freedom which reminds us of the sportive freaks of Cromwell, whose character for military genius, fanaticism, and hypocrisy he in many points resembled.

He courted no distinction beyond others in food or dress. Dates and water, or sparing allowance of barley-bread, the abstemious diet of his country, were his usual fare. Milk and honey to him were luxuries: when he ate, he sat cross-legged on the ground; and when he travelled he divided his scanty morsel with the valet, who generally rode behind him on the same animal. On solemn occasions he feasted his companions with rustic and hospitable plenty; but months sometimes elapsed without the comforts of fire or cookery being seen on his hearth. To finish this portrait of his humility, we learn that he was in the habit of performing the most humble and menial offices of the family. The lord of Arabia disdained not to mend his own shoes and his coarse woollen garment; he milked the sheep, kindled his fire, swept the floor, and served his guests at his own table. His liberality in bestowing alms bordered on extravagance, and often left him without money or provisions for the maintenance of his household. The sincerity of his ghostly injunctions to charity and benevolence was attested at his death by the exhausted state of his coffers.

His attention to the cares of the toilette was extraordinary in a person so immersed in devotion and conquest. Whenever he went to the mosque, or on a military expedition, he carried with him a vessel of odoriferous ointment, antimony for eye-paint, a comb, and a mirror; and in default of the latter, he would adjust his head-dress by the reflection of water. The two things on earth in which he most delighted were women and per-

fumes ; the fervour of his piety, he affirmed, was increased by these sensual pleasures ; and he took care that his religion should make ample provision for their enjoyment. Nothing scandalized his Christian adversaries more than the freedom with which he indulged his conjugal propensities. From the laws which he imposed on others he claimed special exemption for himself ; and in the gratification of his carnal desires he scrupled not to subject his character as an apostle, and even the pretended counsels of Heaven, to the imputation of weakness and inconsistency. The most public and criminal excesses were legalized by Divine revelation. The sanctity of the temple, the distinction of fast-days and holy places, he might, in compliance with demands of nature, violate with impunity. The barrier of prohibited degrees which confined his followers was no limit to his passion ; claiming, as they did, a peculiar and exclusive license.

His seraglio, instead of the legal number of four, contained fifteen or seventeen (others say twenty-six) wives ; and, what is singular, all widows, excepting only the daughter of Abu Beker. Next to Kadijah, his beloved Ayesha engrossed the greatest share of his confidence and attention. She had the reputation of being the most accomplished lady of her time ; and long after his death she was revered as the Mother of the Faithful. Her youth and beauty maintained the ascendant in the harem ; but her behaviour, if not criminal, was at least indiscreet. In the nocturnal march against the Mostalekites, the loss of a pearl necklace obliged her to dismount ; and the train proceeded, unconsciously leaving her behind. Saffwan, an officer of the rear-guard, found her unveiled and overcome with sleep ; and conducted her in the morning on his own camel to the camp. The temper of Mohammed was inclined to jealousy, and his enemies gladly seized the opportunity of wounding his domestic honour. But the bitter tears of Ayesha, and her protestations of innocence, softened his

anger. From this perplexing dilemma he was relieved by a Divine revelation, which assured him of her inviolable fidelity. The accusers were chastised, by the same authority, with eighty stripes; and a law was published that no woman should be condemned as guilty, unless the ocular evidence was adduced of four male witnesses. His marriage with Zainab, the wife of his slave and adopted son Zaid, was the dictate of an illicit passion, and a shameful breach of the matrimonial law of forbidden affinities.

Besides his wives he had several concubines, the most noted of whom was the Egyptian Mary. Her charms were irresistible and, notwithstanding the prohibitions of the Koran, the apostle was too deeply enamoured to exercise the virtue of abstinence. To avoid the scandal, he had recourse to secret intrigue; but Haphsa surprised him in her own chamber with his favourite captive. He swore he would for ever renounce the possession of his mistress, and she promised silence and forgiveness. Both parties forgot their engagements—the harem was in a flame of jealousy and revenge; but Gabriel again interposed with a sura to absolve him from his oath; and exhorted him to enjoy the bounty of an indulgent and merciful Providence, without listening to the clamours of his wives. To chastise their loquacious indiscretion, Haphsa suffered a temporary divorce, and the rest were condemned to the penance of a solitary month; during which time the Prophet met with no obstruction in fulfilling the commands of the angel. At the end of thirty days he summoned them to his presence, reproached them for their disobedience, threatened them with eternal separation, both in this world and the next, and hinted at the possibility of supplying their places by others more faithful and devoted. This threat was the more appalling, as no woman whom he had once espoused was permitted to cherish the hope of a second marriage. The main argument by which his apologists excuse his

sensualities was the hope of multiplying his descendants. Yet all the inmates of his harem were childless ; and not a son survived to support the decline of his life, or uphold, after his demise, the dignities of priest and king. Of his eight children by Kadijah, Fatima alone lived to enjoy his paternal tenderness. She married Ali in the first year of the Hejira, and became the mother of an illustrious progeny.

The literary attainments of the Prophet, like many other parts of his character, have been made the subject of controversy. Adopting the authority of the Koran, and the unanimous testimony of Arabian authors, most historians have espoused the conclusion that he was totally unacquainted with literature—ignorant even of the elements of reading and writing. Instead of being ashamed of this defect, his followers gloried in it, as an evident proof of his divine mission. The constant boast of the Arabs was, that the Koran, whose elegance and sublimity were universally acknowledged, could never have been produced without the aid of celestial instruction, by a man destitute of the very rudiments of education. To evade its force, the Christian writers alleged that he was assisted in the compilation of his imposture by various associates, and that the pretended revelations of Gabriel were really the composition of certain private secretaries. A swordsmith at Mecca—two nameless Christians, who possessed copies of the Scriptures—Sergius, the Nestorian monk—and Abdallah, or Salman, a Persian Jew, are all enumerated as accomplices in this impious fabrication. The conjecture of secondary aid is, indeed, rendered probable from his own words. “I know they will say,” he remarks (chap. xvi.), “that a man hath taught him the Koran ; but he whom they presume to have taught him is a Persian by nation, and speaketh the Persian language. But the Koran is in the Arabic tongue.”

We are, however, by no means satisfied that Mohammed was

actually the "illiterate barbarian" that history represents him; and, in spite of Abulfeda, Gagnier, Reland, Sale, and Gibbon, we have a suspicion that his ignorance was more assumed than real—one of those plausible disguises which he employed to throw a veil of mystery over his proceedings. This we may perhaps infer from his extensive commercial intercourse with the polished cities of Syria, and from the fact, that at the time of his birth the use of letters must have been well known at Mecca. The seven poems suspended in the Kaaba, the decree of the Koreish and other documents intended for public perusal, necessarily presuppose that the arts of reading and writing were neither uncommon nor extraordinary attainments. That Abu Taleb, Abu Bekr, Ali and many others of the first Moslems, were familiar with letters, are facts that none have ever disputed. Hence the fair presumption is, that Mohammed was not altogether uninstructed in those accomplishments which were possessed by numbers of his fellow-citizens in the same rank and the same profession. It is difficult for hypocrisy to be consistent; and, notwithstanding all his care and circumspection, the mask sometimes dropped off. If we were to credit his biographers, he wrote letters to several foreign princes; in his treaty with the Meccans he erased his apostolic title, and with his own hand substituted his family name; and in his last illness he demanded materials to record his final instructions to his people. The Arabs, indeed, ascribe the latter to the effect of delirium or disease; and the other they explain by the intervention of a miracle. This, however, is but an unsatisfactory explanation: and the evidence of these incidental facts seems to attest that there were moments when his pretended incapacity was forgotten, and when he not only expressed a wish to exercise, but actually practised; that very art of which he and his historians maintained his total ignorance.

That, to a certain extent, Mohammed was a benefactor to his nation cannot be disputed. Gross and absurd as is the whole system of Islam, it possessed many principles in common with the true religion; and is, doubtless in every respect, far preferable to the degrading and monstrous idolatry which formed the ancient and prevailing creed of Arabia. It was a wise and humane jurisprudence that forbade the infant slave to be separated from the mother; that abolished the immolation of children to idols; and the barbarous system of burying females alive. But the language of commendation can extend little farther than to the repeal of obnoxious usages. To the praise of a great or enlightened statesman Mohammed has no claim. That he was superior to the age in which he lived is evident from the success of his imposture; but nothing, except the prejudices of habit or education, could persuade any rational being of his merits as a legislator, beyond that of embodying his loose and obscure institutes in a written form.

Admitting, to their full extent, his mental and intellectual qualifications, his character as a conqueror was deeply stained with the vices of Asiatic despotism. To a candid reviewer of his actions, it may appear that Mohammed was severe from policy rather than cruel by nature; but this can be no apology or extenuation of his guilt.* For the necessity which usurpation creates, the usurper must be held responsible. That the stern Prophet was not insensible to the tender feelings of humanity is attested by unquestioned evidence. His tears mingled with the

* Voltaire, in his "Tragedy of Mahomet," the plot of which embraces the trace and capitulation of Mecca, makes the Prophet "imagine and perpetrate the most horrid crimes." This play, which La Harpe calls a *chef-d'œuvre* of the French theatre, has made its hero a monster of cruelty and injustice, with the view of vilifying religion under the name of fanaticism. But it is at variance with the facts of history, and betrays a gross ignorance of Arabian character and manners. The poet himself confesses that he is unsupported by truth, and roundly alleges, "que celui qui fait la guerre à sa patrie au nom de Dieu, est capable de tout." — *Œuvres de Voltaire*, tome xv. p. 282. *La Harpe, Cours de*

general lamentation for the warriors who fell at Muta; and over the neck of the daughter of his friend Zaid he wept the loss of his most faithful companion;—his disciples expressing their astonishment that earthly sympathies should dwell in the bosom of a messenger from Heaven.

If his inordinate ambition had been content with that pre-eminence to which it might have aspired without a crime,—had he been satisfied with the grand national object of a moral and religious reformation,—and employed his transcendent and commanding genius in civilizing his barbarous countrymen, and reclaiming them from their senseless superstition, without the impious pretensions of a Divine revelation,—his vices and defects, palpable as they were, might have been overlooked or forgotten amid the splendour of his victories; and he might have earned a proud rank among the distinguished friends and benefactors of mankind. But to those who judge of individual worth apart from the pomp and glare of constant triumph,—who investigate coolly the causes of a nation's prosperity, the fame of the Arabian Prophet will not stand the test either of private excellence or of public usefulness. Rude and imperfect as were the ethics of those times, his moral character shrinks with guilty apprehension, even from his own standard of virtue; and our admiration for his astonishing talents and success is quickly lost in abhorrence of the cruel and profane purposes to which they became subservient.

Littérature, tome viii. p. 377. Colonel Vans Kennedy has published an able criticism on this tragedy, exposing its palpable deviations from history as well as from the principles of the drama; but his zeal against the literary sins of the infidel Frenchman has led him to take a much more favourable view of the character and religion of Mohammed than is warranted by the transactions of his life, or the benefits he conferred on his country.—*Transact. of the Lit. Soc. of Dublin*, vol. iii.

THE KORAN.

The Koran—Its reputed Origin—Held in great Veneration by the Moslems—Its literary Merits—European Translations, Du Ryer's, Marracci's, Savary's—Sources whence its Doctrines were borrowed—Its leading Articles of Faith—Angels and Jin or Genii—Examination of the Dead by Munkir and Nakir—Intermediate State of the Soul—the Resurrection—Signs that precede it—Ceremonies of the Final Judgement—The Judicial Balance—The Bridge Al Sirat—Torments of the Wicked—Luxuries and Enjoyments of the Happy State—Women not excluded from the Mohammedan Paradise—Predestination—Prayer—The Mohammedan Sabbath—Ablutions—Circumcision—Alms—Fasting—Festivals—Prohibitions as to Food, Intoxicating Liquors, and Games of Chance—Civil and Criminal Code of the Moslems—Laws respecting Marriage—Theft—Courts and Officers of Justice—Traditions—Mohammedan Sects—The Sounies and Socahs—Their Hatred of each other.

THE Koran, as is well known, imbodyes the pretended revelations of the Arabian Prophet.* It was delivered by its author, and is still received by his followers, as containing every information in the shape of precept and instruction necessary for the guidance and spiritual welfare of mankind. According to them it had an origin far more sublime than that of human invention, its substance being uncreated and eternal, co-existent with the essence of the Deity, and inscribed from everlasting with a pen of light on the Preserved Table in the seventh heaven. Each parcel, as revealed by Gabriel during a period of twenty-three years, was carefully treasured up in the memories of the faithful, or committed to writing by amanuenses, who far want of more dignified materials wrote them on palm-leaves, skins of animals, and shoulder-bones of mutton;—a device practised by the ancient

* Koran is derived from the verb *Karaa*, to read, and means the book to be read.—*Sale, Festin. Dis. sect. 3.*

Arabs, who preserved their poems and works of imagination on these rude tablets, tied together on a string.

The first transcript of this divine volume was thrown in promiscuous detachments into a chest intrusted to the charge of Haphsa, next to Ayesha the most favoured of the apostle's wives. Two years after his death the originals were collected and published by his friend and successor Abu Beker, who took this method of rescuing them from the peril of being lost or forgotten. The volume was afterward revised, or perhaps re-written, by the Caliph Othman, in the thirteenth year of the Hejira. This prince had observed a great disagreement in the manuscripts already extant, those of Irak differing from the Syrian ; both, however, were superseded by the new copies, which were distributed over the several provinces of the empire ; the old being burnt and suppressed. This amended edition of Othman is that read by the Moslems of the present day.

Like the Jews, the Moslems hold their sacred book in the most extraordinary veneration, and attribute to it many cabalistic virtues. They will not suffer it to be read or touched by any of a different persuasion ; and if found in their possession the crime might be capital. They peruse it with great respect, never holding it below their girdless, and always qualifying themselves by first performing their legal ablutions. They swear by it, consult it on all occasions of moment, carry it with them to battle, and inscribe verses or passages from it on their banners and their garments, as they formerly did on their coins. Its principal sentences, written on the walls of their mosques, remind them of their social and solemn duties. They bestow upon it the exalted epithets of the True Book, the Word of God, the Director of Men and Demons, the Quintessence of all Sacred Compositions, and not only the greatest miracle, but the spiritual treasury of 60,000 miracles. They have been at pains to compute the

number of verses, words, and letters it contains ; and even the different times each particular letter occurs. Of the seven ancient copies, the first reckoned 6003 verses, the second and fifth 6214, the third 6219, the fourth 6236, the sixth 6226 ; and the seventh 6225 ; but they agree in the common amount of 77,639 words and 323,015 letters.

After the example of the Masoretic rabbis, the learned Moslems have introduced vowel-points to ascertain the true meaning and pronunciation ; which without this adventitious light, must often appear obscure.* The most ancient manuscripts now known are on parchment, in the Cufic character ; the modern are in the Niskhi, on paper curiously prepared from silk, and polished to the highest degree of beauty. Exemplars are to be found in every public library in Europe ; but, as the Christians are prohibited the use of the Koran, most of these have been taken in battle, and some of them belonging to princes and persons of distinction. Copies of peculiar elegance were found among the spoils of Tippoo Sultan. That most admired for the character of its writing and embellishments was formerly the property of Soliman the Great, and is preserved in the Museum Kitcherianum at Rome.

Of the literary merits of the Koran the Arabs speak in terms of rapture. The most esteemed doctors of the mosque pronounced its style to be inimitable,—more miraculous than the act of raising the dead. Whatever may be its defects as a work of genius or merit, it is universally allowed to be written with great elegance and purity of language. Sometimes, in imitation of the prophetic

* Like the Hebrew and Greek, the antiquity of accents or vowel-points in the Arabic has been much disputed. Hottinger (*Clavis Script.* p. 403) and Adler (*Museum Cufic. Borgianum*, p. 3437) contend that the language was never without them ; though their shape and position have occasionally varied. Gregory Sharpe (*Dissert. on the Origin. Power of Letters*, p. 87) maintains that the vowel-points were not in use till several years after the time of Mohammed. So likewise think the Turks, who give Ali the honour of the invention. — *Mill's Hist. of Muham.* chap. v. p. 281, note.

and Scripture phraseology, it rises above the ordinary strain, and magnificently paints the Almighty seated on his throne of clouds and darkness, and dispensing laws to the universe. Though written in prose, it is measured into chapters and verses like the Songs of Moses or the Psalms of David. The sentences have the soft cadence of poesy, and generally conclude in a long-continued chime, which often interrupts the sense and creates unnecessary repetition. But to an Arab, whose ear is delighted with the music of sounds, and whose ignorance is incapable of comparing the productions of human genius, this metrical charm was its principal commendation; and was in fact so devoutly esteemed, that they adopted it in their most elaborate compositions.

All European translators have felt and acknowledged the difficulty of transfusing into their versions a lively image of those verbal and ideal charms peculiar to the original. The translation of Andrew du Ryer, a Frenchman, published for the first time at Paris in 1647, long maintained the highest credit; but it is very dull, tame, and tiresome; and in his frigid prose we look in vain for the glowing and figurative expressions of the Eastern muse. Some years afterward (in 1698) appeared at Padua the Latin edition of father Lewis Maracci, the confessor of Pope Innocent XI. and professor of Arabic in the College of Wisdom at Rome. It was the result of forty years' labour, and contains, in two folio volumes, a life of Mohammed, a refutation of his religion, the Arabic text of the Koran, with his own translation, and a vast collection of notes;—a work of such prodigious erudition as to merit a place in the same niche with the toilsome researches of the Benedictine monks. The zealous father, however, was more skilled in oriental than in Christian literature; more intent on exposing the frailties and blasphemies of his author, than in weighing his character on his religion in the balance of

impartial criticism. His knowledge must obtain for him the respect of his readers, but his mode of reasoning will frequently excite their ridicule. He is one of that numerous class of writers to be found among the ponderous shelves of Continental divinity, who make no distinction between form and substance; and he pours as great a torrent of learning and argument on the trivial as on the important part of the Mohammedan code.*

George Sale has maintained in England the honourable character of her Asiatic scholarship. His translation of the Koran is that with which we are most familiar, and has received the approbation of every master of the Arabic tongue. His Preliminary Dissertations are a valuable mine of Arabian history. Perhaps the only fault in his version is its being given in the form of solid and compact prose instead of being separated, as in the original, into verses. Maracci attended to this division, but he rendered it word for word, and has often disguised the thoughts and idioms of the flowery prophet in the unseemly garb of a barbarous Latinity. Savary has also preserved this distinction; but he has done more,—he has infused into his French translation much of the spirit and beauty of the original. Among the numerous oriental versions, those into the Persic and Turkish are held in

* Parts of the Koran have been edited by Erpenius, Golius, Zehendorfius, Ctenardus, Ravius, Pfeifferus, and Danzius. The first edition of the entire work in the Arabic was published at Venice in 1530, by Paganini of Brescia; but the pope was so alarmed that the book was immediately condemned to the flames; copies of it are therefore extremely rare. Peter, abbot of Chuni, in the fourteenth century, ordered a Latin translation to be prepared, which was published by Bibliander in 1550. A complete edition of the Arabic Koran was published by Hiccklema, at Hamburgh, in 1684. *Reineccii, Hist. Alcoran*, sect. 8 9 10. *Peignot, Diction. des Livres Condamnes au Feu*, p. 227. *Mill's Hist. of Muham.* p. 285. Purchas in his *Pilgrimes*, and Heylin in his *Cosmogra.* have given the chief heads of the Koran in English. The French of Du Ryer was translated by Alexander Ross, who thought it necessary to premonish the reader of his danger by "a needful caveat," of which the following is the exordium—"Good reader, the great Arabian impostor now at last, after a thousand years, is by the way of France arrived in England: and his Alcoran, or gallemausy of errors,—a brat as deformed as the parent, and as full of heresies as a cold head is full of scurf,—has learned to speak English."—*Blicaut's Hist. of Otom. Empire*, vol. ii. See also *Retrospect. Review*, vol. iii.

the highest estimation. Yet, with all these advantages, it will be difficult to impregnate the mind of a "European infidel" with any sentiment approaching that enthusiasm of respect and veneration in which the Koran is held by its own believers. He will peruse with impatience the endless repetition of pious declamation, the incoherent rhapsody of fable and precept, of promises, threats, and admonitions, which seldom excite any definite feeling, or idea,—which sometimes, as Gibbon justly remarks, crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds.

Its materials are entirely borrowed from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, from the legends of the Talmudists, the Apocryphal gospels then current in the East, the traditions and fables of the Arabian and Persian mythology,—all heaped together without any fixed principle or visible connexion. When describing the various attributes of the Divine Being, whether physical or moral, it conveys no clearer notions of the inscrutable essence than we before possessed. It only re-echoes the language, and feebly imitates the expressions, of the inspired penmen. But the copy is far below the great original, both in the propriety of its images and the force of its descriptions. Its brightest passages are lost in the blaze of the purer light; and its loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the Book of Job composed, in a remote age, in the same country and in the same language. Even the enchanting fiction of the Mohammedan paradise was no original invention. The Jews had planted the mansions of the blessed in the seventh heaven, and furnished them with beautiful gardens. The idea of the celestial sphere is taken from the *Almagestum* of Ptolemy, whose writings were translated into the Arabic tongue, and have continued for seventeen centuries to be deemed the true astronomical system by the greatest part of the Asiatic world. The black-eyed houris were the creatures of the Magi. The streams, trees, nymphs, exqui-

the viands, and rich vestments, appear to be almost literally copied from the furniture of the Hindoo abode of happiness. The glorious but allegorical city of the Apocalypse, formed of gold and precious stones, with its twelve gates, its waters of life, and fruits of healing virtue, were grossly interpreted into sensual enjoyments.

With the theology of the Koran the reader is already acquainted. Its fundamental articles are comprised in the celebrated theorem, or confession of the Moslem faith,—*LA ALLAH IL ALLAH ; MOHAMMED RESOUL ALLAH*—"There is but one God; and Mohammed is the apostle of God." This creed may be termed pure Deism; founded, as it is, on the unity and indivisibility of the Divine nature.

The Mohammedans divide their religion into two distinct parts, —faith and practice; each embracing a variety of subordinate particulars. The former or doctrinal department, besides a belief in God, in his Scriptures, in his prophets, and in his absolute decrees of predestination both of good and evil, inculcates a similar persuasion as to the existence and purity of angels, the resurrection of the body, and a general judgment. These comprehend the six great points of faith; most of which have already been brought under the reader's notice. Angels are conceived to be spiritual beings created of fire, which neither eat, drink nor propagate their species. It is heresy to deny their existence, or to assert any distinction of sex among them. Various forms, offices, and occupations are assigned to them; but four are more honoured, and oftener mentioned than the rest, as being higher in the favour and confidence of the Almighty: Gabriel, the minister of revelations; Michael, the friend and protector of the Jews; Asrael, the messenger of death; and Israfael, who will sound the last trumpet at the resurrection. They also believe that two guardian angels, who

are changed daily, attend on every man to witness and record his deeds. The fall of Eblis or the devil, for refusing to pay homage to Adam at the Divine command, is a doctrine of the Koran; as is the belief of an intermediate order of creatures, the Jin or Genii, of a grosser fabric than angels requiring nourishment, marrying, subject to death, and responsible like other mortals, for their conduct.

The resurrection and final judgment of the human race have been adorned by the Mohammedans with many legends and fanciful embellishments. The day is to be preceded and ushered in with vast solemnity. Every corpse, when laid in the grave, is supposed to be catechized by two examiners, Munkir and Nakir, black and livid angels of a terrible aspect, who order the dead men to sit upright, and answer their interrogatories as to the soundness of his faith. If his replies are satisfactory, the body is suffered to rest in peace, and refreshed by the air of paradise; if not, his torture commences. He is beaten on the temples with iron mallets, gnawed and stung, till he receives his final doom, by ninety-nine dragons with seven heads each; which some interpreters allegorize into the acute anguish of a guilty conscience. There are sects who reject this notion of a sepulchral examination; but the more orthodox receive it as founded on the express authority of their Prophet.

The dissolution of the body by the stroke of death is palpable to the senses; and the existence of its immortal part is consonant to the wishes of nature and the speculations of the soundest philosophy. There is, however, beyond this separation, an interval of doubt and darkness, which neither the wisdom nor the restless curiosity of man has been able to penetrate.

The learned Moslems have exercised their ingenuity and their fancy in describing the various occupations and abodes of the soul in this intermediate condition, which they call Ak

Barzakh ; but their opinions seem better adapted to convince the illiterate than to satisfy the doubts of the sceptic or the philosopher. The souls of the faithful they distinguish into three classes. Those of the prophets only have immediate admission into paradise. The martyrs undergo a sort of Pythagorean imprisonment in the gizzards of green birds, which feed on the fruits and drink of the waters of those delectable habitations. As to the disposal of the third class, there is not the same agreement. Some fix their abode near the sepulchres of their earthly companions ; some with Adam in the lowest heavens ; others enclose them in the trumpet of the archangel, or in the Zemzem well ; while infidels are to be shut up in certain a pit in the province of Hadramaut ; or hurled by the angels down to a dungeon in the seventh earth, under a green rock called the Devil's Jaw, there to suffer torment till soul and body are again united at the resurrection. Such are the idle and puerile discussions that have engaged the doctors of oriental theology ; fables better suited for the amusement of children than for the academy or the mosque.

The precise time of the resurrection, Mohammed, wiser than many Christian fanatics, has not presumed to determine. It is a secret known to God only ; and even Gabriel, when interrogated on that point, did not blush to confess his ignorance. But signs, both in heaven and earth, will darkly announce that awful catastrophe, when the material universe shall be destroyed, and the order of creation confounded in the primitive chaos. Eight lesser and seventeen greater phenomena will precede this general dissolution. The faith of men shall decay ; the meanest shall be advanced to eminent dignities ; and the maid-servant shall become the mother of her master. Among the greater signs are enumerated the sun's rising in the west ; an eclipse of the moon ; the appearance of a huge beast compounded of various species more grotesque than the horned monster of the Apo-

calypso, which shall imprint her mark on the faces of all mankind, and demonstrate in the Arabic tongue the vanity of every religion except Islam; the coming of Antichrist, and the irruption of Gog and Magog, whose vast armies, in their career of slaughter and desolation, will drink the rivers dry, and whose bows, arrows, and quivers will serve the believers seven years to burn; the descent of Jesus on earth near the White Tower of Damascus, under whose reign the nations shall enjoy security and abundance. The relapse of the Arabs to their ancient idolatries,—the demolition of the Kaaba,—the speaking of beasts, birds, and inanimate things,—a smoke enveloping the whole earth, and a wind that shall sweep away the souls of all who have but one grain of faith in their hearts,—sum up the catalogue of these indications.

Still the hour of resurrection is left uncertain. Three blasts of the trumpet (the Koran mentions only two, but the more orthodox sects have added another) will be the immediate signal, “when the whole earth shall be but a handful to the Almighty; and the heavens shall be rolled together in his right hand.” The first trumpet, called the Blast of Consternation, will strike all creatures with terror,—shake the earth to its centre,—level the mountains,—darken the sun;—unsphere the stars,—and dry up the sea. The second, the Blast of Extermination, is the dread harbinger of death to all living beings,—a fate from which Azrael himself will not be exempted. After a pause of forty years will be sounded the Blast of Resurrection, when the dispersed particles of humanity, even to the very hairs, shall be re-assembled, and the souls imprisoned in the trumpet shall fly forth like bees to meet their respective bodies, filling the vast space between earth and heaven. This awful summons will recall to life every creature,—angels, genii, men, and animals; but the manner of their resurrection will be different. The destined partakers of

eternal happiness will rise in honour and security,—those doomed to misery in disgrace, and under terrible apprehensions. The first-fruits of the grave will be Mohammed himself. His retinue will consist of the classes,—believers not distinguished for good works will march on first: those remarkable for piety will ride on white-winged camels, standing ready by their sepulchres, with saddles of gold or silver; the ungodly, timid and abashed, will creep grovelling with their faces on the ground; or, according to certain traditions, will change their shape into that of some brute typical of their vile propensities. While apes, swine, and intolerable stench designate respectively the sensualist, the miser, and the idolater; the unjust judges shall grope in blindness,—the false accusers gnaw their tongues in despair,—and the vainglorious be dressed in garments polluted with pitch.

The reunion of the soul and body will be followed by the final judgment of mankind; when each must give an account, and receive the reward of his actions. Though the procedure will be rapid and decisive,—not longer, as the Arabs express it, than the milking of a ewe,—a considerable pause will take place before its commencement,—a pause of anxious suspense both to the just and the unjust; the latter having their faces covered with blackness, and bathed in an agony of sweat, some to the ankles, some to the knees, and others to the mouth; in proportion to their several demerits; and this excessive distillation is the less surprising, considering the trampling and pressure of so vast a concourse, and the fiery beams of the sun which will approach them within the length of a bodkin.

In his picture or copy of this sublime solemnity, Mohammed has too literally represented the forms, and even the slow and successive operations of an earthly tribunal. Each individual shall be minutely examined as to the circumstances of his life, and required to make public confession how he spent his time, or

accumulated his wealth, or employed his talents and his learning: To these interrogatories he will be at liberty to offer the best defence in his power, by implicating others as the authors or partakers of his guilt. Even soul and body may dispute their respective share of criminality; and have the measure of their blame and punishment determined by the degree of evidence they can produce. The offending member may accuse the eye, and both plead in mitigation the carnal desire. The most exact measure of justice will be observed; and the good and evil deeds of mankind accurately weighed in a balance, real or allegorical, of so vast a capacity that its two scales,—one of which hangs over paradise, and the other over hell,—are large enough to contain both heaven and earth.* Into these, thoughts, words, and actions shall be impartially cast, and according as the tremendous beam preponderates sentence will be awarded.

A singular mode of compensation will be allowed for the redress of injuries, but curiously illustrative of the Arabian doctrine of revenge. The aggressor must refund an equivalent of his own good deeds for the benefit of the person he has wronged,—the only means of reparation in his power. Should the balance still be in his favour, even to the weight of an ant, this remnant will secure his admission into paradise. But, on the contrary, should his stock of good works be exhausted, and any sufferers left who have not received satisfaction, his demerits will be burdened with an equal quantity of their sins, and the punishment

* The believers in a literal balance allege that, as thoughts and actions have no specific gravity, the books in which these are written will be thrown into the scale.—*Said, Prelim. Disc. sect. iv.* The idea of men's actions being recorded in a book is Scriptural. Matthew Paris, in the Vision of Thurcillus, has described the ceremony of weighing souls in the presence of the devil and the apostle Paul. Archbishop Turpin relates that, on balancing the merits of Charlemagne, the chances of salvation were against the emperor, until St. Jago threw into the scale the timber and stones of the churches which he had founded. This decided the matter; and the devil sunk off in rage and disappointment.—*Hist. de l'empereur, Charles Mag.*

due to them be visited on his guilty head. While the infidel part of mankind are condemned for their opinions, the actions alone of the Moslems will be examined; for their religious tenets, as the very name implies, are regarded as unexceptionably orthodox. The same rule of judgment will apply to genii and irrational animals; for both are held accountable. The weaker cattle shall take vengeance on the strong, and the unarmed on the horned, until the injured have entire satisfaction according to the strict law of retaliation; and when their wrongs are equitably adjusted, they shall be changed into dust,—the only exception to this doom of the brute creation being Borak, Ezra's ass, and the dog of the Seven Sleepers, which, by special favour, will be permitted to rank among the true believers. The length of time consumed in the day of judgment, the Koran, in one place, makes 1000, and in another 50,000 years.

Another perilous trial, which awaits every soul without distinction, is the passage of the famous bridge, Al Sirat (or the strait), which spans the dreadful abyss of hell, and is represented to be finer than a hair, and sharper than the edge of a sword. This frightful path is beset with briars and thorns; but the good will find no impediment; they will cross with ease and safety,—Mohammed and Fatima leading the way; all the faithful being commanded to hold down their heads till she pass. To the wicked these obstacles will prove fatal; involved in darkness and dismay, they miss the narrow footing, and plunge into the fathomless gulf that yawns beneath them.

The regions of happiness and misery have been already partially described. It was the policy of Mohammed to terrify his followers by pictures of the most appalling torments; and regular degrees of suffering are ordained for every modification of guilt. The dark mansions of the Christians, Jews, Sabæans, Magians, and idolaters are sunk below each other with increasing

horrors, in the order of their names ; while the seventh or lowest hell is, with laudable justice, reserved for the faithless hypocrites and nominal professors of every religious system. This dismal receptacle, full of smoke and darkness, tradition asserts, will be dragged forward with roaring noise and fury by 70,000 haltsis, each hauled by 70,000 angels. The unhappy wretches will suffer from the extremes of heat and cold,---from the hissing of numerous reptiles, and the scourges of hideous demons, whose pastime is cruelty and pain. Despair will increase their misery ; for the Koran has condemned them to these everlasting abodes without the smallest hope of deliverance. This eternity of damnation, however, is reserved for infidels alone ; for the Prophet has judiciously promised that all his disciples, whatever be their sins, shall be ultimately saved by their own faith and his intercession. When the wicked Moslems drop from the narrow bridge, they fall only into the uppermost and mildest of the seven hells. The term of their expiation will vary from 900 to 7000 years ; at the end of which, when “ the crimes done in their days of nature are purged away,” and their skin burnt black, they will be released ; the infernal soot and filth being washed off in the river of life till their bodies become whiter than pearls.

With the structure of the Mohammedan paradise, and the peculiar nature of its felicities, the reader is somewhat acquainted. Before entering, the believers will be refreshed by drinking at the pond of their Prophet, which is supplied by two pipes from Al Kawther, one of the celestial rivers. Distinctions will be observed as to the time of admission ; Mohammed, who will enter first, having declared that the poor (forming the majority of its inhabitants) will gain admittance 500 years before the rich. At the gate each person will be saluted by those beautiful youths appointed to serve and wait upon him, who will be the heralds of his arrival.

The measure of felicity will be proportioned to the deserts of the individual,---the most eminent degree being reversed for the prophets; the second for the doctors and teachers of the mosques; the next for the martyrs; and the last for the common herd of believers. The celestial joys of Mohammed were addressed chiefly to the indulgence of luxury and appetite. Rivers of water, trees of gold, tents of rubies and emeralds, beds of musk, garments of the richest brocades, crowns set with pearls of matchless lustre, silken carpets, couches and pillows of delicate embroidery, are among the rare treasures provided for the gratification of the external senses. Other entertainments are on a scale of similar magnificence. Whatever is subject to waste requires sustenance; and the hungry saints will find abundant supply in a loaf large as the whole globe, in the flesh of oxen, and in the livers of fishes (delicacies among the Arabs), one lobe of which will suffice 70,000 men. While eating, each will be served in golden dishes to the amount of 300, and waited on by as many attendants. Wine, forbidden in this life, will be freely allowed in the next; and may be drunk to excess without palling on the taste, or incurring the risk of intoxication. The Tooba, or tree of happiness, so large that the fleetest horse could not gallop in a hundred years from one end of its shadow to the other,—bearing dates, grapes, and all manner of fruits, of surprising bigness and inconceivable relish, will extend its loaded boughs to the couch of every believer, bending spontaneously to his hand, and inviting him to pluck of its vintage. And should his capricious desires incline, its branches will yield the flesh of birds or animals, dressed according to his wishes; while from its expanding blossoms will burst vestures of green silk, and beasts to ride on ready saddled, and adorned with costly trappings. That every sense may have a congenial gratification, the ear will be ravished with the melodious songs of angels and houris, with the vocal harmony of the trees, and the

Æolian chime of the bells that hang on their branches, moved by the soft winds of heaven. When to this train of gorgeous and sensual luxury are added the seventy-two damsels (the portion of the humblest of the faithful), whose charms shall eclipse all other glories, whose complexions are bright as rubies, and whose eyes, resembling "pearls hidden in their shells," shall never wander to any but their husbands, we may form a tolerable conception of those delights to which the voluptuous Mussulman looks forward as his chief felicity in another world.

The most exquisite and artificial pleasures of this life become insipid from long possession, or superfluous from the limited capacities of their mortal owner. Mohammed has made provision against both contingencies. At whatever period believers may die on earth, in heaven they shall never exceed the potent and animated age of thirty. A moment of happiness will be prolonged to 1000 years, and the enjoyment will be enhanced by an increase of abilities to the extent of a hundred fold. Amid the endless varieties of flavour and fragrance their appetites will never cloy; and they shall be exempted from those troublesome secretions which nature has made so indispensable to the health and comfort of the human animal. The eye of the enraptured possessor, so strong will be its vision, will wander over his gardens and groves, and decry the beauties of his wives and his wealth at the distance of 1000 years' journey. Should any of the faithful desire children (for without the wish the end would be unaccomplished), the space of one hour will suffice for the birth and growth of a young believer sixty cubits high,—the alleged stature of Adam, and the standard height of paradise. Or should his fancy turn to the rustic pleasures of agriculture, a moment of time will see his luxuriant crops spring up and come to maturity.

Women, so conspicuous in the Koran as incentives to religious zeal, have, by some, not only been excluded from heaven, but

deprived of the attribute of immortality---a soul. This opprobrium must be ascribed to the misrepresentation of the Christians or the ignorance of the Mohammedans, since its contradiction may be clearly inferred from their creed. Notwithstanding the prevalence of this vulgar error, the gates of paradise will be open to both sexes ; but whether they shall inhabit the same or separate apartments is a point yet undecided. Mohammed had too much respect for the fair to teach such humiliating doctrine. His law rejected the negative precept of the gospel, of "neither marrying nor giving in marriage;" but he has prudently abstained from specifying the male companions of the female elect, whether they will be united to their earthly spouses, or have paramours of musk created for them ; lest, as an ingenious historian has remarked, he should alarm the jealousies of their former husbands, or disturb their felicity by the suspicion of an everlasting union. Like men, their actions will be subjected to the same judicial balance, and rewarded or punished accordingly ; though their felicity will not be so exquisite, as their deeds cannot have been equally important or meritorious. At the same time, the Arabian apostle has left it recorded, on the evidence of his own eyes, that the majority of infernal wretches are to consist of this frail and fascinating portion of humanity. Their degraded state in oriental society, as to their moral and intellectual character, may still be inferred from the legislative precept of the Koran, which estimates a woman as worth only the moiety of a man, and makes the fine of an offence against the former but one-half of that for an injury to the latter.

That the carnality of the future state, and an unlimited indulgence of the corporeal propensities, constitute a fundamental principle of the Mohammedan religion, numerous passages in the Koran place beyond all controversy. Some of the followers and modest apologists of that creed have revolted at so gross a doctrine,

and adopted the convenient excuse of figures and allegories. But the sounder and more consistent party abjure the refined notions of types and parables; they adhere to the literal acceptance of the text, and would consider the highest metaphorical enjoyments a worthless substitute for the luxuries of the 'Tooba-tree, or the black eyes of the aromatic virgins.

Of predestination, as an article of Moslem belief, it is unnecessary to repeat what has already been stated. Its use, as a serviceable instrument in the hands of the warlike Prophet, and the effects it produced on his followers, was probably the only revelation that taught him the divine mystery. The apparent inconsistency between necessity and responsibility did not escape the penetration of his companions, who naturally reasoned, "Since God hath appointed our places, may we confide in this, and abandon our religious and moral duties?" But the son of Abdallah was not to be entrapped in this dilemma, and he replied, "That good works were the spontaneous fruits of the happy, while bad were a characteristic test of the miserable. Over all the Mohammedan nations of the present day the tenet still reigns in its pristine force; and its effects are visible in that torpid inactivity of mind which supersedes the exercise of reason and industry, and considers every attempt to change the common order of things as a crime not far removed from rebellion against the established laws of the Deity.

The preceding sketch will suffice to give an idea of the first grand division of Islam, and the six cardinal points in its Confession of Faith. The second, or practical branch, comprehends four fundamental duties. 1. Prayer. 2. Alms. 3. Fasting. 4. The Pilgrimage to Mecca.—Prayer is a most important duty of the Mohammedans; it is declared to be the pillar of religion, and the key of paradise. The literal command of the Koran appears to enjoin only four times of daily prayer,

called *namazi* ; but a slight difference in the signification of the word has led the expounders of the sacred law to decide that five were meant : in the morning before sunrise,—directly after mid-day,—in the afternoon,—in the evening after sunset, while twilight remains,—and before the first watch, or midnight.* At these stated periods of devotion every true believer is summoned by the voice of the muezzins or public criers from the minarets,—*Allah akhbar ! Allah akhbar !* &c. “ God is great ! God is great ! there is but one God ! Mohammed is his Prophet ! Come to prayers ! come to prayers ! ” and in the morning call are added the words, “ Prayer is better than sleep ! prayer is better than sleep ! ”—a sentiment not unworthy the consideration of those who profess a purer religion.

To indicate the direction of the Kaaba, towards which their faces must be turned, their mosques have the *mehrab* or niche, pointing to the Holy City ; and where these conveniences are impracticable, tables are furnished, calculated for finding the kebla. Their litany requires a certain number of ejaculations, which the more scrupulous count by a string of beads. Various ceremonies and attitudes are prescribed,—sitting, standing, kneeling, adoring with the face downwards, and seventeen *rikats*, or bowings of the body, two at morning prayers, three in the evening, and four at each of the other performances. In imitation of the old Jewish custom, or rather in consonance with the general feeling of Asiatic jealousy, the female sex are prohibited

* The words of the Koran are, “ Until ye can distinguish a white thread from a black by the daybreak.”—(Chap. ii.) The Jews determined the time of their morning lesson to be when they could discern the blue thread from the white in the fringes of their garments.—*Salé, Prelim. Diss.* sect. iv. p. 149. Mohammedanism is evidently not made for the Arctic regions. The Arabs divide their day into twenty-four hours, and reckon them from one setting sun to another. The moment when the sun disappears is called *Mogreb* ; about two hours after is *El Ascha* ; two hours later, *El Marfa* ; midnight, *Nus-el-Lejl* ; the dawn, *El Fadjer* ; sunrise, *El Subh* ; noon, *El Duhr* ; three hours after noon, *El Asr*.—*Nieb. Descript. de l'Arabie*. The hours of prayer are, *Mogreb*, *Nus-el-Lejl*, *El Fadjer*, *El Duhr*, and *El Asr*.

from joining in public prayers. Rejecting the days hallowed by the Jews and Christians, Mohammed consecrated Friday as the Sabbath of the Mussulmans. But its observance is by no means enforced with that strictness and decorum which distinguish the Jewish and Christian institutions. Except when engaged in the legal performance of their devotions, the faithful are allowed to resort to their pastimes or even their worldly employments. Originally, few mosques had regular preachers, the caliphs themselves discharging that function in a sort of harangue or exhortation to the people. The ancient Arabs appear to have had no other clergy than their chiefs or patriarchs. A priesthood or hierarchy of different ranks was afterward substituted over all the Moslem dominions; and perpetual revenues, from endowments or money gathered for pious uses, established for their maintenance.

Purification or cleansing of the body is an indispensable qualification, and pronounced by their apostle himself to be the key of prayer, without which it cannot be acceptable. The same ritual that prescribes their devotions enjoins on all Moslems a variety of preparatory legal washings. Certain cases require a total immersion of the body, called *ghasl*, which, on many occasions, is repeated three or four times a week. The *wodhu* is the ordinary ablution or washing of the face, hands, and feet, after a particular manner, and is necessary to the performance of every religious act. The number and repetition of the minute observances must to us appear idle and ridiculous; but the founder of Islam saw the utility of captivating the senses of a rude and ignorant multitude by a display of ceremonial rites. The precision with which they are described would often revolt the delicacy of European notions. Each ablution is regulated by the strictest order of method and precedence. Every stage of the process is accompanied with pious ejaculations:—the right

Hand has a prayer different from the left; the head, the neck, and ears, are washed each with its appropriate address to the Deity. The element may be rain, river, sea, well, snow, or ice water; but it must be free of all impurities in taste, colour, or smell. When water is scarce or unattainable, there is permission to supply its place with sand, dust, gravel, ashes, &c. This mode of performing the wudhu is called *A'tsiamoum*. It is not, however, the merit of originality, for the Arabs and Jews made a similar use of earth, leaves, or buds of plants; and we read in a Greek author (Cedrenus) that the Christian rite of baptism was administered with sand to an expiring traveller in the wilderness of Africa.

Connected with this department of the Mohammedan liturgy is the ceremony of circumcision, both to males and females,—a rite in use among the idolatrous Arabs; as also in Egypt, Abyssinia, Ethiopia, and other countries to which the laws of the Jews did not extend. No certain age is prescribed, nor is the practice absolutely necessary; but the seventh year is esteemed the most convenient; and it is a reproach to all good Mussulmans to want this national symbol of their faith. It is always in the house of their relations that this religious ceremony is performed; the operators are the public barbers, and the patients are subjected to a confinement of fifteen days. The imam of the mosque assists in his priestly capacity; and, in families of distinction, the occasion is celebrated with alms, sacrifices, feasting, and other sumptuous entertainments. It is not to be confounded with the rite of baptism, which usually takes place on the day of the birth; the imam simply pronounces the name, and whispers into the child's ear an exhortation to be faithful to his creed, and attentive to prayers.

Charity is imposed as a religious duty on every Mussulman. The Koran frequently and strongly recommends it; and, in ad-

dition to what is exacted by law, every believer must make donations to the indigent, otherwise he is not considered to have performed the duty of almsgiving in all its extent. Alms are of two sorts, legal and voluntary. The former, by some called *zakat*, is of indispensable obligation, and defined by the legislator with minute precision, both as to kind and quantity. Originally, the *zakat* amounted to two and a half per cent. on the principal of the estate; and was commanded to be paid in cattle, including camels, cows and sheep, money, corn, fruits, and even merchandise. Strictly to accomplish the law, every Mussulman was enjoined to bestow a tenth of his revenue; and if his conscience should accuse him of fraud or extortion, the tithe, by way of confiscatory atonement, was enlarged to a fifth. Upon the wide diffusion of Islam, the *zakat* was found to be not only difficult to collect, but unequal and invidious. The learned doctors split into a multiplicity of opinions about the proportion and mode in which it should be levied on property of various kinds. It has in consequence been generally abandoned, or restricted to goods imported by way of trade. The voluntary alms is left to the conscience of the giver; but the obligation of charity is so vehemently recommended, both by precept and tradition, that few orthodox believers evade the sacred duty.

The creed of Mohammed is hostile to the ascetic virtues. The voluntary penance of monks and hermits was odious to a prophet who censured in his companions a rash vow of abstaining from flesh, women, and sleep. The legitimate purpose of fasting, it is obvious, is the prevention of offences, not their punishment; but instead of making it a frequent or arbitrary observance, he has entirely frustrated its beneficial effects, by restricting it to a particular season of each year. Although voluntary penance is recommended, the month of Ramadan is especially set apart for religious abstinence. For thirty days, between the first appear-

ance of the two new moons the various members of the body must be kept under rigorous prohibition. To taste food or drink, to smell perfumes, or swallow spittle, to vomit, bathe, or even breathe the air too freely from daybreak till sunset, would render this sacred ordinance null and void. But from evening till day-break, the faithful are allowed to refresh nature, though the more scrupulous renew their fast at midnight. When the Ramadan falls in summer, this self-denial is extremely rigorous and mortifying; for the patient martyr must wait the close of a tedious and sultry day, without assuaging his thirst with a drop of water, or tasting a particle of nourishment that can recruit his strength or gratify his senses. During this consecrated season other duties acquire an additional merit; charity becomes doubly virtuous, and the retaliation of injuries is forbidden. But, like other external ceremonies, this law is accounted a dead letter unless the performance is accompanied with a suitable disposition of heart and spirit. The only amends for these statutory mortifications, are the two *bairams* or principal annual festivals. The former (*Id al Fetṛ*, or feast of breaking the fast) begins on the first of the month immediately succeeding Ramadan, and is kept from three to five or six days. The other (*Id al Korban*, or feast of the sacrifice) commences on the 10th of Dulhajja, during the time of the pilgrimage.

The nature of oriental climates has rendered particular kinds of food detrimental to health, and led to a division of animals into clean and unclean. The filthiness of the hog, and its tendency to engender cutaneous diseases, have caused it to be proscribed in most warm countries. The interdict laid down in the Koran, in which the Mussulman doctors comprehend beasts and birds of prey, does not extend so far as the Mosaic catalogue. All amphibious animals are unclean; so are the ass and mule: but lawyers differ about the horse. Camels are lawful, hares,

neuter; but it is a mistake of ignorant writers to accuse the Arabs of feeding on dogs and wolves. The inhibition to eat blood was levelled against a common practice in the time of paganism, of drawing it from a live camel, which they cooked by boiling in a bag or gut. The animals proper for the diet of the faithful must be killed agreeably to a prescribed form; if slain accidentally, or in hunting, they may be eaten; but the most orthodox fashion is by cutting the throat.

Reasons both philosophical and medicinal have been urged for abolishing the drinking of wine. The first injunction of the Koran was simply against excess in the use of strong liquors, as incentives to quarrelling and bloodshed. This not proving sufficient, the special restriction was converted into a positive and general law by which inebriating fluids were altogether proscribed. A precept so clear would hardly seem capable of admitting a latitude of interpretation, yet a diversity of sentiment exists as to its exact import; some contending that the statute allows the moderate use of wine, while the more conscientious hold it absolutely unlawful not only to taste that liquor, but to make it, or traffic in it, or even to maintain themselves by the money arising from its sale. The libertine and the hypocrite find means to evade the statute, and indulge freely, notwithstanding the threatened pains of hell.

The Moslem lawyers, with the casuistry of their profession, have so refined the simple injunctions of the Koran, that their essence is nearly lost. The crime of tippling may be practised with impunity to any extent short of outrageous disorder. If the smell of wine be not on the breath of the accused, or his intoxication self-apparent, evidence to the fact is of no avail; except in cases where the flavour may be presumed to evaporate, from the distance the offender has to travel to the residence of the magistrate. Even if the odour remain, or if he should vomit

wine, witnesses must have seen him drink the forbidden juice ; for, as the muftis and mooilabs ingeniously argue, he may only have sat among wine-drinkers, or wine may have been administered to him by force or fraud. When the crime is fully proved eighty stripes is the punishment of a free man ; but a slave is liable only to forty, on the principle that, as bondage deprives him of half the blessings of life, he should suffer but half its punishments ; all offences being supposed to increase in magnitude in proportion to the rights and enjoyments of the guilty. The inhibition against intoxicating liquors has been extended by the more orthodox to coffee, opium, tobacco, hashish, and benj, or the leaves of hemp in pills or conserve ; but at present the whole of these articles are not merely tolerated, but used without any religious scruple whatever.

The moral argument against intemperance in drinking applied with equal force to the prohibition of gaming. Dice, cards, tables, sortilege, all Moslem commentators agree to be expressly prohibited. An artful and plausible distinction saved chess, the favourite pastime of the East, from this sweeping ordinance. That its success depends less on chance than skill and management has satisfied most of the Moslem nations of its lawfulness ; who allow it under condition that it be not made a speculation for money, or a hinderance in the regular performance of their devotions. The fulminations of the Prophet are interpreted to have been directed chiefly against the carved pieces of ivory or wood which the idolatrous Arabs used in playing, being rude figures of men, elephants, horses, and dromedaries ; and consequently condemned in the same text with image-worship. The pure orthodox sects substitute plain pieces of wood and ivory ; but the Persians and Indians are less scrupulous about the sin of using carved images, or betting money.

The civil and criminal laws of the Mohammedans are based

on the Koran, and extended into a sort of digest in various collections of supplementary traditions. To enter into the several decisions and interpretations of the more learned civilians might be curious, but would engross too large a space for our purpose. The restraints on polygamy, and the punishment of conjugal infidelity, have already been incidentally mentioned. The sole privilege which the laws of the Prophet give to a wife, but deny to concubine, is that of dowry. In point of reputation their characters are without distinction; and the children of both are held legally in the same consideration. The power of dissolving the nuptial bond by divorce is granted to both sexes, but with different privileges. By the Mohammedan law, as well as the Mosaic, reasons which to us appear trivial justify the husband in severing the tenderest of all human connexions. Though a written divorce with the Moslems is in general use, the verbal declaration of the husband is sufficient; but this nominal facility of repudiation is powerfully checked by subsequent circumstances. In securing to the widow and the orphan that part of the property which is settled on her at marriage, and which, in the times of paganism, was often unjustly taken from them, the author of their system has vindicated the right of the female sex, and entitled himself, in this instance, to the praise of a wise and humane legislator. A woman's dower is entirely at her own disposal, and totally free from the control of her husband or his creditors; and so great is her independence in this respect, that mothers frequently assign the reversion to their sons, who have compelled payment of it from their fathers,—a privilege in singular opposition to the general condition of females in Eastern countries.

The fourth chapter of the Koran has detailed at length the laws relating to infancy, succession, and dowry,—matters of high importance in the estimation of the Moslems; and, in the fifth,

the power of testamentary disposition is acknowledged, and several directions given for making this will in a solemn and authentic manner. The Mqhammedan punishment of theft is unreasonable, and breathes the spirit of a barbarous age. "If a man or woman steal," says the Koran, "cut off their hands, in retribution for what they have committed."* According to the practice of the best Moslem courts, amputation is not to be inflicted unless the value of the stolen articles amounts to five dinars, or forty shillings,† and unless they be found in custody. In all cases where the penalty attaches, the right hand is to be struck off for the first offence, and the left hand for the second. Incarceration is the punishment for reiterated offences. The whole of a band of robbers are answerable for the acts of any one of their number: and if murder is also committed by them on the highway, they are put to death, even if the blood-avenger should forgive them; the sentence may be crucifixion or amputation, or both, at the discretion of the judge.

With regard to injuries or crimes of an inferior nature, where no particular punishment is awarded by the Koran, and which are not expiable by fine or compensation, the Moham-medans, as the Jews did in similar cases have recourse to the bastinado, the most common chastisement used in the East at the present day; and which is performed by beating the offender on the soles of his feet. As they are fond of a celestial origin for their civil as well as sacred institutions, the cudgel, the instrument generally employed to carry the judge's sentence into

* In cases of theft, which are punished by amputation, slaves and freemen are on an equal footing; for the Moslem doctors have gravely decided that it is impossible to have amputation.—*Mill's Hist.* p. 325. D'Ohsson (*Tab. de l'Emp. Ott.*), Reland (*De Relig. Mahom.*), Bohovius (*De Litur. Turc.*), will explain the laws and liturgy of the Moslems.

† Five dinars may be reckoned equal to about 2*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.*, as the present value of money.

execution, and which has been found of such admirable efficacy in keeping the naughty in good order, they pretend to have descended from heaven.

As their religious and juridical code is the same, the clergy are expounders of the law. Three general classes of judicial officers are recognised,—muftis, cadis, and mushtahids; but their powers vary in different nations. In India the cadi is the supreme civil judge. In Turkey he is the ordinary judge. The mufti is the nominal chief magistrate; but he has no tribunal, and never decides causes except those of great moment. The cadi is the officer who gives the law operation and effect; and in all questions of importance he is assisted by several moolahs, or learned men. The Koran, or its most esteemed commentators, regulate his decisions; and in novel cases he exercises his own judgment. The mosque is the place where he must sit for the execution of his office; or he may use his own house, so that there be free access to the people.

Besides the Koran, various traditions of the actions and sayings of the Arabian Prophet have been preserved; and these constitute the second authority of Mussulman law. The Koran was suited only for a rude people; and when the power of the caliphs increased, it became impossible to govern their numerous subjects by the comparatively few rules and maxims which it contained, most of which were local, and quite inapplicable to many of the nations who had submitted to the Saracen arms. This deficiency admitted only of one remedy,—that of rendering the original law more copious by authentic supplements. As the founder of their economy was believed never to have spoken but by inspiration, an account of these traditionary sayings was carefully noted down from his wives and companions. This immense collection was called *sonna*, a word equivalent to *custom*.

or *institute*, and somewhat resembles the Jewish Mishna.*

Of these collections six are held in peculiar esteem. One was made by Abu Høraira, a constant attendant on Mohammed, who nicknamed him the *Father of a Cat*,—an animal of which he was particularly fond, and carried always about with him. That formed by Abu Abdallah of Bokhara is peculiarly famous. Two hundred years after the Prophet's death he selected 7275 genuine traditions from 100,000 of a doubtful, and 200,000 more of a spurious character. This collection was compiled at Mecca, and is adopted by the Sonnees.

Neither the simplicity of his creed, nor the terror of the sword, nor the exhortations of the pulpit could establish that unanimity of sentiment which Mohammed professed so ardently to desire. The spirit of division, which appeared among his followers even before his death, broke out with greater violence under his successors. The Mussulman sects have been far more numerous and violent than those of Christianity; and the history of the mosque presents as melancholy a view of the weakness of the human heart, and the pride of the human intellect, as is afforded by the annals of the church. Volumes might be filled with their names and their tenets. The same knotty points in scholastic theology that puzzled the divines of Christendom,—the essence and attributes of God,—the justice of predestination, and its compatibility with freedom of will,—the province of reason in matters of faith,—and a number of casuistical questions on

* The only complete work in the English language expressly on these traditional laws, is a translation of the *Mischat ul Masabih*, or "Niche for holding the Lamp." The English version is by Captain Matthews of the Royal Artillery, and was published at Calcutta, in 2 vols. 4to, in 1809. The *Mischat* was properly a commentary on the *Masabih ul Sunnat*, or "Lamp of Religious Observances," collected by the Imam Hussein of Bagdad, who died A. H. 516. Another juridical commentary is the *Hadaya*, a work of very high authority in all Moslem countries where the Sonnee faith prevails. In 1791, Colonel Charles Hamilton published an English edition, in 4 vols. 4to. The first volume of Colonel Bailie's *Digest of Mohammedan Law* was published at Calcutta in 1805.

the moral beauty or turpitude of actions,—have been the theme of bitter and implacable controversy among the doctors of Islam.

The two leading sects are denominated the Sonnees and the Sheahs, or Shiites. The difference between them was originally more political than religious. The former appropriate to themselves the name of orthodox; they are traditionists, or believers in the Sonna; and, consequently, acknowledge the authority of the first caliphs, from whom most of these traditions were derived. Distracted with controversy, they at length reposed on the faith of four eminent theologians,—Hanifa*, Malec, Shafei, and Hanbal, who were not only reputed holy and learned divines, but masters in jurisprudence. These interpreters were in some points not altogether unanimous; but they were deemed radically sound, and have given their names to four sects, honoured as the pillars of the Sonnee faith. After their death each had a separate oratory in the Temple of Mecca and they have been canonized as the four imams, or high-priests, of the established orthodox religion.*

The Sheahs, or sectaries, differed mainly from the preceding in asserting the divine and indefeasible right of Ali to succeed the Prophet. The same spiritual and secular dignity which they conceive should have descended immediately to the father, ought to have been transmitted to his lineal posterity; consequently, they consider, not only the three first caliphs, but all their successors, who took the title of Lords of the Faithful, as usurpers. This belief is hostile to the whole fabric of the Sonnee tradition, which rests on the authority of these three caliphs;

* Hanifa was poisoned at Bagdad, A. H. 150. Malec died at Medina, A. H. 178-9. Shafei was a native of Syria, and ended his days in Egypt, A. H. 204. Hanbal died at Bagdad, A. H. 241.—*D'Osson, Tab. Gen. Introd. Sale, Prelim. Diss. sect. viii.*

though they admit the Sonna where its sources have not been contaminated. The Persians were the first nation who proclaimed themselves of this sect, about the commencement of the Saffavean dynasty (A. D. 1499) ; and for more than three centuries their creed has been the prevailing faith of that country. The authority of Hanifa maintains the ascendant in Turkey, Tartary, and Hindostan ; Malec is chiefly recognised in Barbary and the southern parts of Africa ; Shafei has followers both in Persia and Arabia, and possesses a limited influence over the sea-coast of the Indian peninsula and the eastern islands

There are numerous other heretical sects among the Mohammedans who disagree even on fundamental points of faith. The spirit of hostility between most of these, especially the Sonnees and Sheahs, is rancorous and irreconcilable. Names which are never mentioned but with blessings by the one and hourly cursed by the other. * No wars, as has been justly remarked, that ever desolated the Christian world, have caused half the bloodshed and misery, or been so deeply stamped with the character of implacable animosity, as have arisen from the political and religious controversies of the Mohammedan sectaries.

Having thus laid before the reader a sketch of the life and religion of the Arabian Prophet, we shall now advert to the war-like achievements of his followers, who constantly appealed to their victories as an express testimony of Heaven to the truth of their creed ; and who, under the terrible name of Saracens,* extended their dominion over more kingdoms and countries in eighty years than the Romans had done in 800.

* The derivation of the name Saracen has puzzled etymologists. Some have suggested Sarah, the wife of Abraham ; but they forget that the Ishmaelites were descended from Hagar. *Saraka*, a city of the Nabathians, *Sahara*, a desert, and an Arabic word signifying a thief, have all been adopted as the true etymon of the name.—*Stephan. de Urbibus. Hotting. Hist. Orient. lib. i. cap. 1. Bocharti Opera*, vol. i. col. 213. *Asseman, Biblioth. Orient. tome iv. p.*

CONQUESTS OF THE SARACENS.

Disputes in choosing a Successor to Mohammed—Abu Beker elected Caliph—Ali refuses Submission—Turbulent State of the Empire—Invasion of Syria—Success of the Saracens—Capture of Bosra—Siege of Damascus—Battle of Azzadine—Surrender of Damascus—Death of Abu Beker—Accession of Omar—Pursuit and Plunder of the Damascene Exiles—Action at the Fair of Abyla—Battle of Yermouk—Siege and Capitulation of Jerusalem—Journey of the Caliph to that Capital—Surrender of Aleppo—The Castle besieged and taken by Stratagem—Reduction of Antioch—Flight of Heraclius—Subjugation of Syria and Palestine—Disgrace and Death of Khaled—Invasion of Persia—Battle of Cadesia—Occupation of Madayn—Immense Booty—Battle of Nahavund—Defeat and Death of Yezdijird—Final Conquest of Persia.

It was a political error in Mohammed, and one that proved fatal to the unity and stability of his empire, that he neglected to name his immediate successor, or lay down regulations for filling the vacant caliphate. This is the more surprising, as he left no male posterity of his own, and must have foreseen the dismal consequences of an interregnum, or a disputed succession. His demise was the signal for immediate contest between the two grand parties of his followers. The same day that laid him in the grave saw them assembled to deliberate on the choice of a new sovereign. The Refugees insisted on their prior claim, as being the fellow-citizens, the kinsmen, and first proselytes of

367. *Abulfed. Geog. a Gagnier*, p. 63. The appellation has no allusion to any particular city, or any trait of national character. It comes from the Arabic word *Sharak*, and means an *Eastern People*; which the Saracens were in reference to the Romans.—*Pococke Specim.* p. 33-35. Quid enim sonat Saracenus quam *Sharkion* et in plurali *Sharkin*, i. e. *Orientes incolae*.—*Noble's Arab. Vocab.* p. 105. It was not till after the Roman conquests in Palestine that the name was known in Europe, when it superseded that of Ishmaelites and Nabathians. It was obscurely applied by Pliny and Ptolemy to certain tribes, and used in a larger sense by Ammianus and Procopius. But it was not adopted as a national designation by the Christians until the year 715, in the reign of the Caliph Walid.—*Marigny, Hist. des Arab.* tome ii. p. 393.

their apostle. The Ansars pleaded their meritorious services in offering an asylum to the fugitives of Mecca and their persecuted master. The Koreish were still jealous of the pre-eminence of the line of Hashem. The hereditary title of Ali was opposed by Ayesha, and offensive to the aristocratic spirit of the other chiefs, who were secretly anxious to keep the sceptre within their reach by a free and frequent election. Omar and Abu Beker were both proposed, but they mutually declined to take precedence of each other.

Separation appeared inevitable; swords were drawn, and the hasty structure of Moslem greatness was tottering to its foundation, when the tumult was seasonably appeased by the disinterested resolution of Omar, who quietly renounced his own pretensions, and offered his hand in token of fealty and obedience to his venerable rival. Perhaps the crafty politician saw in the advanced age of the new caliph but a narrow barrier between himself and the throne.

The Hashemites alone declined the oath of fidelity; and it is remarkable that their chief, Ali, the cousin of their Prophet, and the husband of his favourite daughter, had not, in that numerous conclave, a single voice to advocate his claims. He had publicly refused his concurrence in the inauguration of Abu Beker; but the intrigues of the disaffected could not prevail with him to disturb the peace of his country; nor could the arrogance of Omar, who threatened to consume his habitation with fire, terrify him into submission. The new sovereign despised the pompous epithets of royalty; and, in reverence for the founder of their religion, adopted the simple and more flattering title of caliph. But scarcely had his accession taken place, when he was overwhelmed with the accumulated intelligence of apostacy, revolt, and imposture, from all quarters. The religious spirit which the example of Mohammed had kindled among the Arabs was but a blaze

of fanaticism; and on his decease they seemed desirous of returning to the altars of idolatry. The Christians were tributaries rather than subjects; and the obstinate Jews had again directed their hopes to the exploded ritual of Moses. The tribes of the Desert were sinking back into their ancient paganism; and the Koreish would perhaps have restored the images of the Kaaba, had not Abu Beker checked their inconsistency by an effective reproof: "Ye men of Mecca, will ye be the last to embrace, and the first to abandon the religion of Islam?"

The success of the Prophet had encouraged others, even in his lifetime, to emulate his pretensions. Aswad, a dexterous usurper, who seized the government of Yemen, had already suffered the punishment of his rebellion. Moseilama had made alarming progress in the territory of Yemama, and was still in the zenith of his apostacy. A Christian woman, who aspired to the honours of a prophetess (for the spirit of imposture was not confined to the male sex), became his associate; and even in the public camp the decencies of words and actions were spurned by these privileged and amorous saints. Khaled, the scourge of the infidels, with an army of 40,000 men, defeated and dispersed his followers at the battle of Akraha, where 10,000 of the rebels fell; a black slave pierced the upstart apostle with a javelin. His paramour, whose name was Sejaje, returned to idolatry; but afterward became a Mussulman, and died at Bussora. Of the rest of the impostors, some on recantation were admitted to pardon, while others fell victims to their own credulity. By this prompt display of military force the spirit of insurrection was put down. The loyalty of the faithful was revived and confirmed. The wavering tribes returned with humble contrition to the duties of prayer, fasting, and alms; and the religion of the Koran was again believed, and more steadfastly professed, by the whole nations of Arabia. Order and security were restored; but it be-

came necessary to provide an immediate exercise for the restless spirit of the Saracens. On the reduction of Yemama, Khaled marched into Irak and the provinces on the Lower Tigris, where the dominion of the Koran was further extended by a series of rapid and splendid victories. An annual tribute of 70,000 pieces of gold was the first-fruits of these remote conquests.*

From the banks of the Euphrates the general was suddenly recalled to take the command in another quarter. The dying Prophet had meditated the subjugation of Syria; and Abu Beker, was only prevented from following up his intentions by the revolt of his own subjects. Events favoured a renewal of the enterprise; and no proposition could have come more welcome to the faithful, burning alike for pillage and the propagation of truth.

The resolution of the caliph was speedily made known. His circular to the tribes kindled the flame of pious and martial ardour in every province: "This is to acquaint you that I intend to send the true believers into Syria, to take it out of the hands of the infidels; and I would have you know that fighting for religion is an act of obedience to God." From Mecca, and the distant shores of Yemen and Hadramaut, bands of intrepid volunteers hurried to the capital; complaining less of the insupportable heat, and the scarcity of provisions, than the inaction of their master—When the ranks were complete, he gave his particular instructions to Yezid, son of Abu Sofian, whom he had appointed general of the forces:—To avoid injustice

* The following are our authorities for the history of the early caliphs and the wars of the Saracens:—Abulfeda (*Annal. Moslem.* a Reiske, 4 vols. 4to); Elmascia (*Hist. Saracen.* ab Erpenio) Abulfaze (*Hist. Compend.* Dynast., a Pococke); Eutychius (*Annal.* a Pococke, 2 vols. 4to); D'Herbelot (*Biblioth. Orient.*); *Mod. Univ. Hist.* vols. i. ii. iii.; Ockley (*Hist. of the Saracens*, 2 vols. 8vo), who, to the shame of English patronage, died in Cambridge jail instead of Cambridge University; Marigny (*Hist. des Arab.* 4 vols.); Price (*Retrospect of Mohammedan Hist.* 4 vols. 4to), whose work is a copious and valuable mine of original authorities. The Greek writers on that period, Theophanes, Zonaras, Cedrenus, &c., may be consulted in Niebuhr's collection of the Byzantine Historians.

and oppression ; to study to deserve the love and confidence of the troops ; to acquit themselves like men fighting the battles of the Lord ; to spare fruit-trees, cattle, and corn-fields ; to stand to their engagements, and never to stain their victory with the blood of women and children. "As you go on," he continued, "you will find some religious persons that live retired in monasteries, who propose to themselves to serve God that way. Let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their buildings. And you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns ; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute." This exemption in favour of the monks is by some alleged to have been in return for their hospitality to the Prophet in his youth, or their assistance in compiling the Koran ; the terrible doom of the secular clergy was only fulfilling a precept of their religion.

The news of these preparations reached Heraclius ; but it was in vain that he appealed to the pride and courage of his subjects, and represented to them the shame of allowing a warlike nation to be insulted by the contemptible Arabs. In the first skirmish the Christians lost their general, with 1200 men. The messengers from Yezid daily announced new successes, and a present of the spoil was despatched to the caliph as the first-fruits of their expedition. The zeal or the avarice of the Arabian chiefs was attracted by the prosperity of their countrymen. A fresh reinforcement was levied for the subjugation of Palestine, the command of which, after some dispute, was delegated to Amru. Zaid was disappointed of the commission ; but fanaticism overruled all regard for personal interest. Nowhere was this spirit more remarkable than among the early Saracen generals. Had not the propagation of the Koran exalted them above all private considerations, or had they been actuated by that rivalry

and animosity which divided the successors of Alexander, the power of the caliphs must have fallen back to its original insignificance, and the legions of the Faith, instead of marching onward to empire, might have met an inglorious defeat from the swords of contending factions. Abu Obeidah had superseded Yezid; but he was less fortunate than his predecessor, and a single reverse condemned him as unfit to hold the supreme command.

In all emergencies of war, the superior genius of Khaled marked him out for the post of honour; and whoever might be the choice of the prince, he was, both in fact and fame, the foremost leader of the Saracens. From Irak he was recalled to Syria, and his arrival altered the aspect of the campaign. Aracca, Tadmor, and Hauran had submitted; but a rash attempt on Bosra had nearly turned the tide of conquest. Serjabil had been despatched by Obeidah with a body of 4000 cavalry, and was repulsed from its gates with loss. Khaled, with 1500 horse, came in time to rally the flying detachment, and saved the believers from the disgrace of a total overthrow. "See, the villains come!" he exclaimed, as the opened gates of the fortress poured forth their martial array into the plain; "they know we are weary; but let us go on and the blessing of God go with us." The battle grew hot; shouts of Allah akbar! Alhamlah, alhamlah! Aljannah, aljannah! (God is great! Fight, fight! Paradise, paradise!) inflamed the enthusiasm of the Saracens, and threw the ranks of the Christians into disorder. With the loss of 230 men, the Arabs remained masters of the field, and the remnant of the enemy fled to their fortress. The capture of the city was accelerated by the duplicity of Romanus the governor, who, to secure his wealth, or save his life, turned both traitor and Mussulman. The conquest of Bosra opened a way for the siege of Damascus. The Grecian emperor was at this time at

Antioch, and, alarmed at the devastations of the Saracens, he sent 5000 men to the defence of the place.

Amid the groves and fountains of this celebrated capital "the hungry Arabs" for the first time pitched their camp. In rude and superstitious ages, a hostile defiance was frequently sent and accepted by the generals themselves, as an omen of future fortune. The personal valour of Khaled was twice displayed in single combat before the two armies, and both the Christian leaders in succession, Azrael and Calous, became his prisoners. Several actions more or less sanguinary were fought; but the Damascenes, finding that every sally only exposed them to fresh losses, resolved to reduce their city to a closer defence. Six weeks of distress compelled them to offer the Moslem leader 1000 ounces of gold and 200 silken robes, on condition of his raising the siege; but Khaled was inexorable, and would listen to no terms but annual tribute or the Koran. They had contrived to drop a messenger from the ramparts, who found his way to Antioch, whence the emperor despatched to their relief 100,000 men, with Werdan at their head. The tumultuous joy of the besieged at the prospect of this seasonable succour revealed the secret to the vigilant enemy; the reinforcement was intercepted, and defeated by a detachment under Derar, who took with his own hand the standard of the Christians, bearing the sign of the cross, and richly adorned with precious stones.

A new levy of 70,000 men, under Werdan, was again assembled in the neighbourhood. These formidable preparations required the junction of the Saracens, who were dispersed on the frontiers of Syria and Palestine. Yezid was at Delka, Nooman at Tadmor, and Amru had not left Irak. In a circular to the latter, Khaled urged him to join his brethren without delay in their march against the infidel Greeks, "who proposed to extinguish the light of God with their mouths." The other generals

had similar orders; and by a singular coincidence in time, the whole forces met on the plain of Aiznadin on the same day (A. H. 11, or the 13th of July, 633); a circumstance which they piously ascribed to the blessings of Providence. On retiring from Damascus, Khaled led the van, in compliance with the wishes of Obeidah, though he offered to take the more perilous station of the rear-guard. The event proved the disinterestedness of his bravery, and the soundness of his judgment; for the besieged, seeing the enemy depart, ventured out with 6000 horse and 10,000 foot, and overtaking Obeidah, defeated him, and carried off a great part of the baggage, with the women and children. The presence of Khaled put a stop to the rout, and of the Christian army only 100 horsemen returned to Damascus. The captives were retaken; among them was the beautiful Khaulah, sister of Derar, and a troop of the heroines from Yemen, who were accustomed to ride on horseback and fight like the Amazons of old. The intrepidity of Khaulah saved the honour of the martial sisterhood. They were disarmed of their swords and bows, but with their tent-poles they kept their infidel ravishers at bay till relieved by their own friends.

Forty-five thousand Moslems mustered on the field of Aiznadin. The troops of Werdan consisted chiefly of cavalry, and have, by historians, been called indifferently—Syrians, from the place of their birth,—Greeks, from the religion and language of their emperor,—and Romans, from the proud appellation still claimed by the successors of Constantine. The armies were in sight of each other, and encouraged to their duty by their respective generals. Khaled put it to the conscience of his Moslems, “to fight in good earnest for religion, or turn their backs and be damned.” To the squadron of ladies, Kaulah, Opheirah, and others whose names the annalists have ungallantly omitted to record, he addressed himself,—“Noble girls! be assured that what

you do is very acceptable to God and his apostle. You will hereby purchased a lasting memorial, and the gates of paradise will be open to you."

Werdan represented to his troops the shame of slavery, and exhorted them to implore Heaven for succour. To his sudden surprise he was approached by a fierce and half-naked warrior, whom he imagined to be a spy, and sent a party of thirty horse to seize him. It was the intrepid and adventurous Derar, who had undertaken to view the state of the enemy. In his retreat he maintained a successful skirmish against the whole party, and, after killing or unhorsing seventeen of their number, reached his companions in safety. On the eve of battle, a grave elder from the Christian army offered to purchase peace by the gift, to each Saracen soldier, of a turban, a robe, and a piece of gold; ten robes and one hundred pieces to their leader; one hundred robes and one thousand pieces to the caliph. "Ye Christian dogs!" replied the indignant Khaled, "you know your option—the Koran, the tribute or the sword. As for your proffer of vests, turbans, and money, we shall in a short time be masters of them all."

The onset on both sides was sustained with vigour, and the battle, or rather the slaughter, continued till evening. Fifty thousand of the Christians fell under the scimeters of the enemy, and the remains of the imperial troops fled—some to Cæsarea, others to Damascus or Antioch. Four hundred and seventy martyrs were left on the field. The spoil was inestimable, including banners, crosses of gold and silver chains, precious stones, suits of armour, and rich apparel. The glorious intelligence was immediately transmitted to the caliph, and diffused universal joy. The Meccans and other tribes hostile to the first preaching of the Koran were now eager to thrust their sickles into the bloody but lucrative harvest of Syria.

The tidings of this defeat filled the Damascenes with grief and

terror and from their ramparts they beheld the ferocious conquerors return to the siege. Amru led the van at the head of nine thousand horse; and the rear was brought up by Khaled in person with the standard of the black eagle. The wretched citizens had made every preparation during this short respite. For a time their courage was revived by the example and authority of Thomas, an excellent soldier, though living in a private station, and son-in-law to the Gracian emperor. He affected to despise the "contemptible Arabs—poor wretches, going about with hungry bellies, naked and barefoot"—and advised the citizens to attempt a sally next morning, and defend themselves to the last, rather than surrender.

Watch was kept during the night, and the absence of the sun was supplied with numberless lights placed in the turrets. At the gate through which they were to march a lofty crucifix was erected in sight of both armies, and before it the bishop with his clergy placed a copy of the New Testament, on the cover of which, as he passed, Thomas imprecated the overthrow of the oppressors, and prayed the author of that divine book to defend his servants and vindicate his truth.

The onset of the Greeks was met with firmness by the Saracens, whose charges were tremendous and irresistible. The brave Aban fell by a poisoned arrow from the hand of Thomas, an unerring archer; but his death was revenged by his wife, a heroine who could handle the spear and the bow with equal dexterity. In the hottest of the battle she sought the place where his murderer fought; her first arrow pierced the hand of his standard-bearer, though the engines from the walls poured stones and missiles on the besiegers thick as hail, her second wounded Thomas through the eye while engaged in single combat with an Arab who had seized his fallen standard. The wound was dressed on the rampart, and the undaunted champion of the Christians refused to quit the field till night separated the combatants. The devoted

widow washed the corpse of her husband, and without a groan or a tear buried him with the usual rites :—" Happy, happy art thou my dear ! thou art gone to the Lord, who first joined us, and hath parted us asunder. Henceforth shall no man ever touch me more ; for I have dedicated myself to the service of God."

The citizens were disheartened ; their patience and their provisions began to be exhausted : and after a siege of seventy days, the bravest of their chiefs yielded to the hard dictates of necessity. Khaled was inexorable, and declined the chance of capitulation, lest the " Christian dogs" might stipulate for their lives and fortunes, and the soldiers be deprived of their plunder. In the mild virtues of Obeidah the besieged had some hope. At midnight a deputation of one hundred of the clergy and principal inhabitants were introduced to his tent, where they were courteously received, and obtained a written agreement that hostilities should cease—that such as chose might depart with as much of their effects as they could carry away—and that, on paying tribute, the rest should enjoy their lands and houses, with the use and possession of seven churches. On these conditions he was allowed to enter the town by the gate nearest his camp, where the necessary hostages were delivered into his hand.

Of these transactions Khaled was entirely ignorant ; and, at the time the truce was concluded, he was storming the walls on the opposite side. By the treachery of a priest, who pretended to have discovered in the book of Daniel the future greatness of the Saracen empire, a party of one hundred Hamyarites were secretly conveyed into the town, and by their means the remainder of the army effected their entrance. The horrid tecbir (the Arabian warcry) of Allah akbar announced to the astonished Christians that their city was lost. The weapons dropped from their hands as they heard the cry of " No quarter !" from the ferocious Khaled. The ruthless scimitar fleshed itself to the full, and a

torrent of Christian blood poured down the streets of Damascus.

The slaughter continued till they reached the church of St. Mary, where the sanguinary conqueror beheld with indignation and surprise the peaceful Obeidah and his troops, with their swords in their scabbards, and surrounded by a multitude of priests and monks. An angry remonstrance ensued between the two generals; the one urging his articles of treaty and the faith of Musulmans—the latter threatening, in right of his office as general, to put every unbeliever to the sword. The rapacious and cruel Arabs would have obeyed the welcome command, but Obeidah averted the atrocious massacre by a decent and dignified firmness. A council of war assembled in one of the churches; when it was agreed, after violent altercation, that the part of the city which had surrendered to Obeidah should be entitled to the benefit of his capitulation; and to this pacific measure Khaled reluctantly assented until a final decision should be pronounced by the caliph.

A large majority of the people accepted the proffer of toleration and tribute, and remained in their ancient habitations. But Thomas and the valiant patriots who fought under his banner preferred the wretched alternative of exile. A protection of three days was granted them, but to extend only to the country in possession of the Moslems. Khaled endeavoured to exclude the miserable refugees from the full benefit of the treaty, by limiting their exports simply to provisions; and sternly declared, that at the expiry of the three days they might be pursued and treated as enemies. In a meadow in the suburbs a large encampment was formed, where in haste and terror the exiles collected their most precious moveables in plate, jewels, and apparel; including the imperial wardrobe, in which there were above three hundred loads of dried silks.

The fall of Damascus was communicated to the caliph, but he

lived not to receive the joyous intelligence ; he died on the very day the city was taken (Friday, the 3d of August, A. D. 634), after a short reign of two years and three months. The manner of his life was simple, austere, and frugal. When he assumed the pontificate, he ordered his daughter *Ayesha* to take a strict account of his private patrimony, that it might be seen whether he had been enriched or impoverished by the service of the state. All he claimed for himself was a stipend of three drachms or pieces of gold, with sufficient maintenance for a camel and a black slave. The surplus of his exchequer, as well as of the public money, was every Friday distributed, first to the soldiers and the most deserving, and next to the most indigent.

The disturbance which attended his own accession *Abu Bekker* happily prevented by a testamentary appointment of *Omar*. The latter at first seemed willing, like the reluctant *Cæsar* to refuse, the kingly crown, as having "no occasion for the place."—"But," replied the other, "the place has need of you." The title of Caliph of the Caliph of the Apostle of God being deemed tautological, and likely to increase to an inconvenient length, was exchanged for that of *Emir el Mumenin*, or Emperor of the Faithful. His first measures were to follow up the military operations of his predecessor ; and after a short expedition into *Irak*, with indifferent success, *Obeidah* continued to prosecute the war in *Syria*.

The *Damascene* exiles had been four days and nights on their march, and might have retired unmolested, but for the impediment of a youthful lover. A noble citizen, named *Jonas*, was betrothed to a wealthy maiden—but her parents, on some slight pretext, delayed the consummation of their nuptials. During the pressure of the siege the danger of their situation induced them to attempt their escape. Having bribed the nightly watch at the gate *Keisan*, *Jonas* rode forward to lead the

way but was surrounded and seized by a squadron of the patrol under Derar. Another horseman followed (it was the lady) ; but the signal in Greek, which the Arabs did not understand,—“ The bird is taken !” admonished his adventurous mistress to hasten her return. He was brought before Khaled, who promised him his wife when the city was taken, on condition of his embracing the religion of the Koran ; if not, he must die on the spot. The lover chose apostacy—professed his belief in Mohammed, and continued in the enemy’s camp to perform the duties of a brave and sincere Mussulman. The lady, whom the tragic muse has named Eudocia, in despair and detestation of her apostate lover, shut herself up in a nunnery.*

When the city surrendered, Jonas flew to the monastery where Eudocia had taken refuge ; but his name was forgotten, his passion scorned : she preferred her religion to her lover, and took her departure in the caravan of fugitives ; bidding adieu to a country which was no longer free, and an attachment which could only be remembered with sorrow. Jonas was inconsolable ; and, in the hope of rescuing his wife, urged the conqueror to pursue the weary exiles who, he assured him, might yet be overtaken, and offered his services as guide. Khaled yielded to his importunities ; and, at the head of four thousand horse in the disguise of Christians, took the rout of the fugitives. In a wet and dark night they traversed the rocky passes of Mount Lebanon ; and at the dawn of day they beheld, in a pleasant valley below, the tents of Damascus shining in the morning sun. Of the hapless wanderers, some lay overcome with fatigue and sleep, others were spreading their drenched garments to dry. Khaled divided his troop into four squadrons, who rushed successively on

* On the fate of these lovers, whom he calls Phocynas and Eudocia, Mr. Hughes has constructed his tragedy, the *Siege of Damascus*.

the unarmed and promiscuous multitude. The Christians defended themselves with bravery ; but the loss of their general, whose head was insultingly mounted on the standard of the cross, announced that victory had declared for the enemy. One man only escaped the fury of the barbarians, to carry to the court of Constantinople the dismal story of the catastrophe.

In the tumult of the battle, Jonas sought and found the object of his fatal pursuit. The indignant lady repulsed his advances sword in hand. After a hard-fought combat she became his prisoner ; but, loathing his perfidious embraces, in a fit of tranquil despair she struck a poniard to her heart. The widowed daughter of Heraclius a princess of admirable beauty was taken captive, and offered to the disconsolate lover ; but he yielded to the wishes of Khaled, who spared and released her without a ransom ; sending her away with a haughty message of defiance to the emperor ; that he should never enjoy peace till his daughter and his dominions were in possession of the Saracens. The bereaved Jonas fought and fell in the service of his adopted religion. To encourage proselytes, Raphi, a brother officer, declared he had seen the blessed martyr in a vision walking in the verdant meadows of paradise, with gold slippers on his feet, and forgetting the love of Eudocia in the embraces of seventy virgins, so bright and fair that, had one of them but half unveiled her charms in this world, the sun and moon must have paled before the splendour of her beauty.

Abu Obeidah had displaced Khaled in the command ; but he had no fixed plan of operation, and his wavering policy was uncertain whether to direct the march of the believers to Jerusalem or Antioch. An expedition was suggested and undertaken, to which the Arabs were solely prompted by their insatiable cupidity. The fair of Abyla, or the Monastery of the Holy Father, a place near the eastern base of the Anti-Libanus, about thirty miles from Damascus, was annually celebrated at Easter by a

vast concourse of merchants. The cell of a devout hermit attracted crowds of pilgrims; young and old, rich and poor, solicited his blessing; and no married couple thought their conjugal felicity complete till they had received his benediction. In the hope of an easy conquest and a large spoil, Abdallah was despatched with a handful of five hundred cavalry.

This festival happened that year to be honoured by the nuptials of the daughter of the governor of Tripoli; and the usual crowd was swelled by an escort of 5000 horse that attended the person of the bride, who had come to have her faith and her fertility confirmed by the pious anchorite. The invaders were awe-struck, but shame prevented their retreat; and their drooping courage revived in the morning when the fair commenced, and the tempting merchandise was spread before their eyes. The reverend prior had begun his sermon, attended by a vast throng, among whom were many of the nobility and officers richly dressed. The avarice of the Saracens was inflamed. "Paradise," exclaimed Abdallah, "is under the shadow of swords; either we shall succeed and have the plunder, or die and gain the crown of martyrdom." The rapidity of their onset gave them the first advantage; but they were encompassed and almost overwhelmed with numbers so soon as the enemy had recovered from their surprise. A hasty message informed Khaled that the believers were in danger of being lost. With a troop of cavalry he flew to their relief; and about the hour of sunset a cloud of dust announced their approach to the weary combatants, whose diminutive band, amid the swarms of their assailants, is fancifully likened to a white spot on a black camel's skin.

Their arrival changed the fortune of the day; shouts of Allah akbar rent the skies; the Christians were dispersed and pursued with great slaughter as far as the river of Tripoli, whose waters saved them from the vengeance of the conquerors. The

various merchandise of the fair, the fruits and provisions, and the money brought to purchase them, became the prey of the spoilers. The monastery, in which the governor's daughter and forty of her waiting-maids were taken, was profaned and robbed of its plate, curtains, and gay decorations; among which, we are informed, was a cloth of curious workmanship, embroidered with an image of the blessed Saviour, which was transported to Yc-men, and sold for ten times its weight in gold. Horses, asses, and mules were diligently loaded with the wealthy plunder, and the gluttoned barbarians returned in triumph to Damascus.

The luxuries of Syria had begun to corrupt the abstemious Arabs, and the messenger that carried to Omar the news of this second victory, reported that the Mussulmans had learned to drink wine. A punishment of fourscore stripes on the soles of the feet was ordered to be inflicted on the offenders; and so tender was the conscience of the believers, that on the proclamation of Obeidah, numbers submitted without an accuser to the penance of the law.

Terror had already spread the fame of the Saracens beyond their actual conquests; though in the prosecution of the war their policy was not less effectual than their swords. The cities of Syria individually trembled for their security. Instead of acting in concert, each was willing to make the fall of other the signal for their own capitulation, and agreed to purchase a temporary respite at an enormous ransom, which only enriched the enemy by impoverishing themselves. Chalcis alone was taxed, at 5000 ounces of gold, as many of silver, 2000 robes of silk, and as many figs and olives as would load 5000 asses. The less wealthy or less obstinate paid in proportion. By these short and separate treaties the union of the Christians was dissolved; their hands were tied up from mutual assistance while the Arabs were ravaging the country; and at the expiry of the truce their

exhausted magazines and arsenals left them an easy prey to the besiegers.

Homs or Emesa, and Baalbec or Heliopolis, both populous and wealthy cities, were the next that yielded to the rapacity of the barbarians. But the slowness of their progress was offensive to the caliph, who wondered at the silence and inactivity of his soldiers. In an epistle to Obeidah he gently insinuated his suspicion that the wives and the spoil of Syria were dearer to them than the service of God and his apostle. The Moslems understood the rebuke, and with tears of rage and remorse demanded to be led forth to the "battles of the Lord."

Repeated messages of defeat and disaster informed Heraclius, then at Antioch, of the success of the insolent barbarians. To arrest their progress, and drive the robbers of the desert for ever from his dominions, an army of 80,000 men was collected from the provinces of Europe and Asia. Cæsarea, Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli, Joppa and other coast-towns were strongly garrisoned. The main body was intrusted to Manuel, one of the bravest officers in the service. He was reinforced by 20,000 Christian Arabs, with Jabalah, king of Gassan at their head. This prince had embraced Islam in the presence of Mohammed; but afterwards, having quarrelled with a person in the Temple at Mecca, he had abandoned the Koran, fled to Heraclius, and, in a letter from Omar to the Syrian army, he was publicly denounced an apostate. The banner of the Gassanites was planted in the van; for it was a maxim of the Greek general "to cut diamond with diamond;" in other words, to oppose the fury of the barbarians with the valour of their own countrymen.

Manuel took immediate possession of Emesa, prematurely evacuated by the Moslems, and advanced to the banks of the Yermouk, where Khaled had taken his position, and where he resolved to stake the fate of Syria. This petty stream (the Hieo-

max of the Greeks), immortalized by one of the most sanguinary battles of antiquity, rises in Mount Hermon, and winding through the plain of Decapolis, is lost, after a short run, in the Lake of Tiberias. The tardy policy of the Grecian general lost him the only chance he ever had of driving the invaders back to their deserts. Instead of attacking them before the arrival of 8000 auxiliaries from Medina, he wasted the time in useless overtures for peace, and allowed the enemy to gain some advantage by routing one of his detachments on their march. An order from the emperor, proposing to try the effect of a conference, was communicated to Obeidah, and Khaled was instructed to repair to the Christian camp. Addressing himself to the rapacity of the Moslems, Manuel engaged to secure the payment of a sum of money, provided they would withdraw from the country: to Omar, as their sovereign, 10,000 dinars* (4625*l.*); to Obeidah, one-half that sum; to a hundred of his principal officer, 1000 dinars each; to every horseman, 100; and to every foot-soldier, 50. Khaled, on his part, offered to their choice the usual conditions of conversion, tribute or the sword; recommending, as the best means of averting further calamity, that "they should admit the lamp of eternal truth into their habitations;" but the offer was rejected with scorn.

Both sides were prepared for action. Manuel disposed of his multitudinous legions into several divisions, each consisting of 20,000 men. Mounted on a black charger, and clad in gorgeous armour, he conducted the movements of the centre in person. The van of the Moslems was led on by Khaled, restored once more to the supreme command; while his colleague, with the

* The gold dinar has been differently estimated, from 5*s.* to 13*s.* 6*d.*—we have taken a medium, or 9*l.* 3*d.* The drachm of gold is reckoned equivalent to about 5*d.* In speaking of the plunder of the Saracens, we may remark, once more, that according to Major Price, the value of money then may be taken as somewhat greater than at the present day.

yellow flag under which Mohammed had fought at Khaibar, was posted in the rear, that the flight of the believers might be checked by the presence of this consecrated ensign. Khaulah and her band of Amazons were stationed in the same line, and for the same reason. The exhortation of Khaled was of tremendous brevity: "Paradise is before you; the devil and hell-fire behind!" Their march to the field was in profound and awful silence; but the ranks of the Christians presented a different scene. The mingled noise occasioned by the priests chanting their *gospels*, and the motions of their beads and chaplets, is compared to the roll of distant thunder, while the glittering of their armours, resembled flashes of lightning.

Their first effort was directed against the centre of the Arabs, which by a violent assault they endeavoured to penetrate; but the whole of the division was annihilated by Khaled with a body of 10,000 horse. Another and an equally unsuccessful attempt was made; yet such was the weight of the Roman cavalry, that the right wing of the Saracens was broken and separated from the main body. Thrice did they retreat in confusion, and thrice were they driven back to the charge by the blows and reproaches of the women, whose tent-poles were more effective than the terrors of everlasting punishment. The battle raged for several days; and night separated the combatants only to renew the encounter. In the intervals of action many a lance was shivered in single prowess; and such was the cunning and skill of the Armenian archers, that in one day the Day of Blinding, 700 of the Moslems lost one or both of their eyes,—a deformity which, instead of considering a misfortune, they gloried in as a mark of Divine favour.

The carnage at Yermouk surpassed that of any preceding battle: the veterans of former wars confessed it to be one of the most desperate and doubtful encounters they had ever seen; but it was decisive. Seventy thousand of the best troops of Heraclius,

with their general, and a vast number of his principal officers, were left on the field. Of the fugitives who attempted to escape many perished during the confusion of the night in the woods and ravines, or in the precipitous water-courses that intersect the adjoining mountains. Besides those that were slaughtered after the defeat, many found a watery grave in the Yermouk, which in their panic they had endeavoured to cross. Altogether, the Christians are stated to have lost 150,000 men in killed, and 48,000 in prisoners. Perhaps the Arabs may exaggerate in point of number; but the Greek historians themselves have admitted the total overthrow of the Roman power in Syria in this sanguinary engagement (Nov. 636), which they long after bewailed as a just retribution for their sins.

Of the Saracens, 4030 martyrs were buried on the spot. Next to the prayers of the caliph, the glory of the triumph has been ascribed to the female warriors; for their ablest generals confessed that their bravery had been in vain, had not the battle been again and again restored by the firmness of the women. The intelligence of the victory, together with the legal proportion of the spoil, were speedily conveyed to the throne of Omar, and received with the most lively demonstrations of joy and gratitude. After detailing the loss on both sides, "I found," says Obeidah in his letter, "some heads cut off; not knowing whether they belonged to Mussulmans or Christians, I prayed over them, and buried them. The numbers drowned are unknown to any but God; as for those that fled to the deserts and mountains, we have destroyed them all."

Recovered from the toils of the campaign at Damascus, the Saracens were eager to be led to new conquests. The dispersion of the Christians left them free to choose which of the fortified towns should be the object of their first attack; and, in obedi-

ence to the caliph's commands, they proceeded forthwith to the reduction of *Ælia** or Jerusalem. Trusting to their engines and the sanctity of the place, the fearless inhabitants disdained to reply to the pacific messages of the enemy, and prepared for a vigorous defence. Ten days wasted in prayer and vain expectation ; and, on the eleventh, the town was beleagured by the whole strength of the Saracen army. The citizens maintained an obstinate siege of four months,—not a single day of which passed without fighting. The patriarch Sophronius imprecated from the walls the Divine displeasure on the disturbers of the Holy City. The warlike machines showered their missiles incessantly from the ramparts: while the difficulties of the besiegers were increased, and their ranks thinned by the inclemency of winter.

The perseverance of the enemy at length induced Sophronius to demand a conference, in the hope of obtaining the terms of an honourable capitulation. Obeidah was equally ready to treat; and the inhabitants consented to surrender on the singular condition of receiving the articles of their security and protection from the hands of the caliph, and not by proxy. This strange proposition was communicated to Omar ; and after some discussion, he resolved immediately to visit the ancient capital of Palestine. The rude simplicity of his equipage and manners is minutely described by the Moslem writers, and presents a striking contrast to the gaudy pageantries that usually surround the haughty monarchs of the East. On this occasion the emperor of the faithful, the conqueror of Syria, Persia, and Egypt, courted no distinction beyond the meanest of his subjects. His dress was a coarse woollen garment, with a scimitar hung from one shoulder, and a bow on the other. He rode a red camel, carrying with him a couple of sacks,

* A name derived from the colony of the Emperor *Ælius Hadrian*.

one filled with fruits, the other with sodden barley in the husk,—a sort of provision called *sawih*, and in general use among the Arabs. Before him he had a leathern bottle of water, and behind him was suspended a large wooden platter. When he halted on the way, the company was uniformly invited to partake of his homely fare; and the humblest of his retinue dipped their fingers in the same dish with the mighty successor of the Prophet. The spot where he reposed for the night was never abandoned in the morning without the regular performance of prayers. On the journey he redressed the wrongs of some poor tributaries, rebuked the licentious polygamy of the ignorant Arabs, and chastised the luxury of the Saracens, by stripping them of their rich silks, the spoils of Yemouk, and ordering them to be dragged with their faces in the dirt.

At Joppa, five stages from Jerusalem, he was met by Obeidah, with the principal officers of the army. Apprehensive lest the meanness of his appearance,—for according to some writers he was leading the camel by the bridle, while the slave was mounted in his turn, the animal being their joint property,—should excite contempt in the eyes of a nation long habituated to more polished observances, they prevailed with him to attire himself in a suit of white apparel, and accept the horses which they had provided for introducing him among his newly-conquered subjects. But he soon felt the encumbrance of this novel equipment: and, resuming his barbarous guise, he entered the camp before Jerusalem, exclaiming against the absurdity of forsaking established usages for the mere gratification of a vain and ridiculous caprice.

The articles of capitulation, by virtue of which the inhabitants were entitled to the free exercise of their religion, to their properties, and the protection of the caliph, were signed; and the sovereignty of the place and of the whole adjacent territory

was vested in the conqueror. In these conditions, the basis of most of the treaties since granted by the Mohammedan princes to the Christians, a broad line of distinction is drawn between the followers of the Cross and of the Koran. The former were to admit the latter into their churches at all times: to entertain them gratuitously on their journey for the space of three days: to rise up, as a mark of respect, when they are disposed to sit; to avoid the same dress, names, language and forms of salutation; to renounce the use of saddles, arms, and intoxicating liquors; to have no crosses in their churches, streets, or books; and not to ring, but merely to toll their bells.

On the ratification of the terms, the gates were thrown open, and the Moslems, with Omar and the officers of the army at their head took possession of the city. The Christian patriarch entered by the side of the caliph, who conversed with him familiarly, putting many questions concerning the religious antiquities of the place. They visited the Church of the Resurrection together; and, at the hour of prayer, the caliph declined offering his adorations in the temple, preferring the steps of the porch; where he spread his mat, and performed his devotions.

Thus fell Jerusalem, the glory of the East, the imperial seat of David and Solomon. The number of the slain and the calamities of the besieged were greater than when taken and sacked by the legions of Titus; yet the servitude of the Romans, either in its condition or its duration, was nothing in comparison with the tyrannical sway of the Saracens, in whose hands it has continued to the present day, except for an interval of ninety years, when the valour of the Crusaders restored it to the possession of the Christians. By command of the caliph, the ground on which stood the Temple of Solomon was cleared of its rubbish, and prepared for the foundation of a mosque, which still bears the name of Omar.

Aleppo, the Beræa of the Greeks, had not then attained the commercial celebrity of later times; but it was a place of considerable strength. The castle was built on a high artificial mound, at a little distance from the town. Obeidah found the inhabitants more disposed for capitulation than defence; and, in the absence of the governor, thirty of the chief merchants secured their lives and religion at a moderate composition. The surrender of the town did not include that of the citadel, which the martial genius of Youkinna, who, at the head of 12,000 men, had routed a detachment of Arabs, was determined to maintain to the last. For more than four months he set the arms of Obeidah and the valour of Khaled at defiance. Three hundred Christian captives were beheaded before the castle-wall; but this execution had no effect in subduing the resolution of the besieged. Omar was applied to for advice, and a reinforcement of fresh troops was despatched with a train of horses and camels to expedite their march. Among these subsidiaries was Dames, a gigantic Arab, of servile birth, but of invincible strength and courage; and his single intrepidity effected what the united perservance of the Moslems had failed to accomplish. Weary at seeing their hopes and their patience consumed at the foot of this impregnable fortress, on the forty-seventh day after his arrival he proposed, with only thirty men, to take the place by stratagem. His design was concealed under the appearance of a retreat; and the tents of the Arabs were removed to the distance of three miles from Aleppo. A Greek belonging to the garrison was seized, and from him some useful communications were extracted.* At the dead of night the adventurers crawled to the foot of the wall, where they lay in ambush. Their leader was covered with a shaggy skin, and provided

* "God curse these dogs," said the illiterate slave when he heard the Greek speak, "what a barbarous language they use!"

with a hard crust of bread, that in case of discovery, he might elude suspicion by imitating the noise of a dog gnawing a bone. Having scaled the most accessible part of the precipice, he ordered seven of his companions to mount on each other's shoulders, himself sustaining and raising the weight of the whole column, till the highest reached the top of the battlements. The watchmen, who were asleep, were hurled to the ground, and despatched by their associates below. Unfolding his turban, the first drew up the second, until they all reached the parapet in safety, ejaculating the while, "Apostle of God, help and deliver us!" With bold and silent step Dames explored the palace of the governor, whom he found in the banquet-room celebrating, in riotous merriment, the pretended retreat of the enemy. Favoured by the darkness of the night, he traversed the castle, stabbed the sentries at every gate, and took possession of their posts without opposition; not however, without exciting the alarm of the garrison, who surrounded and would soon have cut the intruders to pieces, had they not unbolted the gate, let down the drawbridge, and admitted a detachment of cavalry, which, at day-break, had advanced to their relief. The Christians threw down their arms and surrendered at discretion.

The castle, being taken by storm, was pillaged by the Moslems; but, in order to save their wealth, and their wives and children, Youkinna and several of the chief officers became proselytes to the Koran. It was the character of the times to admire acts of desperate and chivalrous enterprises; and on this occasion, the servile condition of Dames was lost in the glory of his exploit. Out of courtesy to their champion, the army did not decamp from Aleppo until he and his fellow-adventurers were perfectly cured of their wounds.

The reduction of Antioch, the seat of the Greek emperors,

was the next object of the Moslem conquerors; but this rich capital was still protected by the strong castle of Azaz, garrisoned by 13,000 troops under Theodorus, and the iron bridge of Orontes. The loss of these defences, and of a partial action which was fought under the walls of the city, decided its fate. The trembling inhabitants purchased their safety by the immediate payment of 300,000 dinars of gold (138,750*£*.) The importunities of his courtiers had for a time retarded the flight of Heraclius; but when he beheld the battlements closely invested by the Saracens, his patriotism yielded to considerations of personal safety. Having assembled the bishops and principal men of the city in the Greek church, he there bewailed the unhappy fate of Syria, which he devoutly ascribed to the sins of the prince and the people. While his ears had been daily assailed with rumours of defeat, his imagination was terrified with dreams of a falling throne, and a crown toppling from his head. Ascending a hill in the neighbourhood, he cast a last look on his beloved Antioch, and the long fruitful valley (the Hollow, or Chelosyria) stretching away with its flourishing towns and glittering turrets, from north to south, between the snowy chains of the two Lebanons; and with expressions of regret and conviction that he should never more behold these interesting and favourite regions, he made his way with a few domestics to the Mediterranean shore, and privately embarked for Constantinople. A Mohammedan tradition has laboured to make him a convert, by means of a cap sent him by Omar, in which was sewed a text of the Koran; and which cured him of an obstinate headache when every other remedy had failed. History, perhaps with some truth, has recorded a conversation between his imperial majesty and one of the Moslem captives, as to the person and dignity of their sovereign. "What sort of a palace," said Heraclius, "has your emperor?" "of mud." "And who are his attendants?" "Beg-

gare and poor people." "What tapestry does he sit upon?" "Justice and uprightness." "And what is his throne?" "Abstinence and wisdom." "And what is his treasure?" "Trust in God." "And who are his guards?" "The bravest of the Unitarians."

Constantine, the eldest son of Heraclius was stationed at Cæsarea, the second metropolis of Palestine; but after the flight of his father and the surrender of so many places of strength, he found himself unable to contend against the united forces of the caliph. Amru with a division of the army infested that part of the country, and was prepared to give battle to the Christians; but the prince, dispirited with losses and afraid of falling into the hands of the Saracens, left his government, and taking shipping in a tempestuous night with his family and his wealth, departed for the tranquil shores of the Bosphorus. The Cæsareans, abandoned by their chief and without the means of defence, with one consent surrendered the city to Amru; having purchased their security by paying 200,000 pieces of gold.

Obeidah, fearing lest the luxuries of Antioch might enervate his troops,—for the Grecian women had begun to seduce the stern virtues of the Arabs,—withdrew his army after a brief refreshment of three days. But Omar was more indulgent than his lieutenant to the infirmities of the faithful. "God," said he in an epistle mildly censuring him for his unkindness to the Moslems, "hath not forbidden the use of the good things of this life to faithful men, and such as have performed good works; wherefore you ought to have given the Saracens leave to rest themselves, and partake freely of the good things which the country afforded, that whosoever of them had no family in Arabia might marry in Syria, and purchase as many female slaves as they had occasion for." The fall of Damascus, Ja-

Jerusalem, Aleppo, and Antioch may be said to have completed the conquest of Syria. The mountainous districts of Palestine were overrun by a troop of 300 Arabs and 1000 black slaves, who, in the depth of winter, climbed the snowy ridges of Lebanon. Tripoli and Tyre were betrayed; a fleet of fifty transports, destined for Cyprus and Crete, entering the harbour of Tripoli, were seized by Youkifna, and yielded to the Saracens a welcome supply of arms and provisions. The towns, or provinces of Ramla, Acre, Joppa, Ascalon, Gaza, Shechem or Nablous, and Tiberias, surrendered without resistance; and their example was followed by the inhabitants of Sidon, Beirout, Laodicea, Apamea, and Hieropolis. Within six years after their first expedition, and 700 after Pompey had despoiled the last of the Macedonian kings, this fertile and populous region submitted to the rule of the Arabian caliph. Eastward, Khaled had extended his victories, and reduced Beles, Racca, Rahabah, and various other fortified towns on the Euphrates.

The same year that completed the subjugation of Syria visited the conquerors with a dreadful pestilence, more fatal to their ranks than the swords of the Greeks or the luxuries of Antioch.

Five-and-twenty thousand of the Moslems, including Obaidah, Yezid, Serjabil, and many of the most distinguished companions of Mohammed, were swept off by the plague of Emmaus (the place where it made its first appearance), which spread its ravages, with a terrible mortality both to men and cattle, over the whole country as far south as Medina.

Khaled though he escaped a species of death so unwelcome to a soldier, survived his fellow-conquerors only three years, and ended his days under a cloud of ignominy and injustice. However unrequited by the caliph, the merit of the conquests in

Syria and Palestine was by the public voice ascribed to the superior skill and singular prowess of this gallant soldier, the fame of whose exploits had long rendered him the theme of general admiration. One of the poets of the day, who undertook to perpetuate his glory has celebrated the "terrors of his mace and the lightning of his scimitar, which spread wretchedness and mourning among the cities of the Franks." A charge of embezzlement and of appropriating to himself the public treasure was preferred against him and too rashly credited by the envious Omar. These suspicions were strengthened by his liberality to the panegyrical verse-maker, and the extravagant dower of 100,000 drachms of gold (2291*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*) to the beautiful widow of Malec, whom he had married while his hands were yet reeking with the blood of her murdered husband. In the presence of the caliph, he was compelled to reply to the interrogatories of his accusers, with his turban tied round his neck, one end of which was held by the common crier. To this indignity, and a fine of one-half of his effects he submitted with exemplary moderation; declaring that the dictates of resentment, however just, should not prevail with him to resist the will of his superior. On a second examination, he was condemned to the further payment of 40,000 drachms (916*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*), being the moiety of all he had been allowed to retain. Such were the multiplied and humiliating mortifications to which this undaunted champion of the Koran was compelled to submit, after rendering so many and important services to the cause of Islam. His last moments were imbittered by the reflection that, after having sought the glory of martyrdom in many a bloody field and felt the weapons of the enemy in every limb, he should descend to the grave wronged and dishonoured, among the common herd of ordinary mortals. The exhausted state of his coffers constrained Omar to acknowledge that his

suspicious had been unjust. The caliph condoled with the aged mother, who was repeating, with tears of anguish, some of the numerous encomiums on her brave but unfortunate son; he visited at Emesa the tomb of the injured conqueror of Syria, and expressed in terms of unavailing regret his esteem for the hero of a hundred battles, whom the hand of death had now placed beyond the reach of envy.

At the the demise of Obeidah, the command of the Moslem army devolved on Amru; and the place of the first conquerors was supplied by a new generation of their children and countrymen. The terrors of the pestilence were lost in the passion for victory and martyrdom which animated the hearts of the Mussulmans. Their eagerness for his sort of reputation may be expressed in the words of an Arabian youth, when tearing himself from the embraces of his mother and sister to join the banner of Obeidah: "It is not," said he, "the delicacies of Syria, or the fading delights of this world, that has prompted me to devote my life in the cause of religion. I seek the favour of God and his apostle; and I have heard that the spirits of the martyrs will be lodged in the corpse of green birds, who shall taste the fruits and drink of the rivers of Paradise. Farewell, till we meet again among the groves and fountains which God has provided for his elect." The devastations of the plague rendered the presence of Omar necessary to repair, as far as possible, the desolate state of the northern provinces. During a residence at Ramla in Palestine, he filled the numerous vacancies, regulated the supply of provisions for the soldiers, and assigned to the heirs of the deceased Moslems all estates to which just and equitable claims could be produced. The Greeks had been driven from every part of the extensive tract between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. To the north of Syria the conquerors passed Mount

Taurus, and reduced to their obedience the rich plains of Cilicia, with its capital, Tarsus, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings. Beyond a second ridge of the same mountains, they spread the flame of war rather than the light of religion, as far as the shores of the Euxine, and the neighbourhood of Constantinople.

To the east they achieved the conquest of Diarbeker; thus violating the utmost limit of Augustus, the long-disputed barrier between Persia and Rome. Already had Yezid threatened to cross the Euphrates; but his retreat was purchased by the governor of the province at the enormous annual tribute of 100,000 pieces of gold. Ayaz, at the head of 5000 men marched into that territory; the walls of Edessa, Amida, Dara, and Nisibis, which had resisted the arms and engines of Shapoor and Nooshirwan, were levelled in the dust; but the victor was recalled, and died at Emesa.

PERSIA, to which we shall next accompany the victorious Saracens, was only saved from an earlier doom by the war in Syria. The wealth of this ancient empire was of itself a sufficient attraction; while its weakness left it an easy prey to the roving bands of "naked lizard-eaters" from the desert. For more than thirty years the reign of Khoosroo Purveez had been marked by a success never surpassed by the most renowned of his ancestors. But his magnificence fell with unexampled rapidity. Within six years he lost all his foreign conquests, and saw his dominions overrun by the legions of Heraclius (A. D. 622), who marched in one direction as far as the Caspian, and in another to Ispahan. The ravages of the Greeks were succeeded by the accumulated evils of famine and anarchy, the disputes of the nobles, and a succession of weak sovereigns; or rather the pageants of rival factions, of whom no fewer than six possessed

the throne in the brief space of as many years. In this state of dissension and decay the Moslems found Persia when they first directed their warlike operations towards its frontiers. And we shall perceive in the sequel, that as much time and exertion were expended in achieving the conquest of the narrow slip of country on the banks of the Orontes, as was employed in the subjugation of those opulent and extensive regions which fill the space between the Euphrates and the distant Oxus.

The death of Abu Beker, and the probability of a contested succession, had encouraged the Persian government to attempt a more effectual resistance to the encroachments of the Arabs; and even to expel them from their usurpations in Irak, where Mothanna presided over the interests of the caliph and the Koran. The attention of Omar was called, at the commencement of his reign, to the "golden soil of Chaldea," so famed for its fertility, the magnificence of its cities, the variety of its manufactures, and the multitude of its flocks and herds. The avarice of the believers was stimulated by the illusions of dreams and the exhortations of prayer; and the ancient awe of the power and resources of the Persian monarchs faded away before the dazzling splendour of conquest and spoliation. Amru, Obeid, and Saleit were despatched with fresh supplies from Medina, to join the troops in Irak; and their first victory was over two small detachments of the enemy, commanded by Jaban and Roostum, the latter showing great personal gallantry, by killing with his own hand several of the bravest of the Moslems. But the main army amounting to 80,000 under the command of Jalaneus or Galen, was on its march, and took post on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, opposite the bridge constructed by Obeid, whose rashness proved fatal to the Saracens. Dispirited by the death of their leader, they fled in confusion. Numbers were slain, and 4000 drowned in attempting to recross the river.

Mothanna, who made a good retreat, communicated to the caliph the news of this disaster, which had nearly lost for ever the fruits of Khalad's victories. A fresh levy marched into Irak under Jarir; and in a second encounter near Hira, which lasted from noon till sun set, the enemy were put to flight, Mahran, their general, having fallen in single combat by the hand of the Moslem leader. The pursuit was most sanguinary, and was remembered as the Day of Decimation, every Mussulman being said to have slain ten of his adversaries; so that the slaughter of the enemy may be estimated at 100,000 men. Their want of success the fickle Persians attributed to the incapacity of their queen, Arzemidocht, a daughter of Khoosroo. "This we get," they murmured, "by suffering a woman to rule over us;" and in the hope of bettering their fortune, the throne was immediately transferred to Yezdijird, a descendant of the renowned Nooshirwan. The first measure of the youthful monarch was to send an envoy to Saad, the leader whom the caliph had appointed to the chief command. A deputation of three old Arab chiefs repaired to Madayn, the head-quarters of the Persian army. Their mean appearance excited the disdain of the luxurious monarch; for they wore the striped camlets of their country, had small whips in their hands, and rude sandals on their feet. "We have always," said he, "held you in the lowest estimation. Arabs hitherto have been known in Persia only in two characters; as merchants and as beggars. Your food is green lizards; your drink salt water; your covering, garments made of coarse hair. But of late you have come in numbers to Persia; you have eaten of good food; you have drunk of sweet waters; and have enjoyed the luxury of soft raiment. You have reported these enjoyments to your brethren, and they are flocking to partake of them. You appear to me like the fox in our fable who went into a garden where he found plenty of grapes.

The generous gardener would not disturb him, and thought the produce of his vineyard would be little diminished by a poor hungry fox enjoying himself. But the animal, not content with his good fortune, went and informed all his tribe. The garden was filled with foxes; and its indulgent master was forced to bar the gates, and kill all the intruders to save himself from ruin. However, as I am satisfied that you have been compelled to this conduct by absolute want, I will not only pardon you, but load your camels with wheat and dates, that when you return to your native land you may feast your countrymen. But be assured, if you are insensible to my generosity, and still remain in Persia, you shall not escape my just vengeance."

The Arabian messengers heard unmoved a speech displaying at once the extremes of pride and of weakness. They did not palliate or deny the scanty resources of their country; and briefly offered to his choice the Koran, tribute or the sword. Yezdijird was too proud to listen to such degrading terms; the embassy was dismissed, and war resumed with all the vigour of which the declining empire was capable. The hosts of Persia were as numerous and as feeble as in the days of Darius; and on this occasion the force of the great king has been estimated at 120,000 men; the command of which was intrusted to Roostum. The Saracens were strengthened by recruits from Arabia and Syria,—their whole army being augmented from 12,000 to 30,000 troops, the best soldiers the East had ever seen.

The plain of Gadesia or Kudseuh, lying on the skirts of the Desert, about about two stages from Cufa, was the scene of action; but four months were spent by the Persians in negotiating, and devising vain expedients to protract hostilities without the hazard of a battle. The Arabs were disposed in three lines; Saad having directed his captains to consider the first speech which they should hear him utter from his post, a terrace,

of the castle, as the signal to adjust their ranks; the second, to fix their arrows in the level, to couch their lances, and draw their swords; and the third to rush upon their adversary. Various skirmishes, and trials of individual valour in single combat, took place in the interval between the two armies; but the battle itself lasted for several days; each distinguished by its peculiar appellation. On the first, called the Day of Concussion, darkness put an end to the contest; both sides retiring to their encampments without claiming any advantage. With the morning sun, the conflict was renewed; and while the armies were engaged with fury and obstinacy, the crimson banners of the advanced guard of the Syrian reinforcement made its appearance, in three fierce and successful charges, contributed greatly to damp the ardour of the Persians. From this well-timed assistance, the Day of Succour obtained its name. It was signalized by the heroism of a Mohammedan warrior, Mahujen, who, for having indulged too freely in the use of wine, was doing penance by order of his general in one of the chambers of the castle. Seeing the battle raging below, he could not restrain his enthusiasm; and having prevailed with one of the female attendants, Selma, to undo his fetters, under promise of returning in the evening, he mounted a piebald charger, and sallied into the field. His extraordinary prowess was instrumental in securing the victory; and as his person had not been discovered, he resumed his chains and his captivity, in strict conformity with his engagement. Saad, who had witnessed the seasonable gallantry of the intrepid stranger, was surprised to find himself indebted to the interposition of his own prisoner; he embraced him with great affection; presented him with the mare and the armour he had used with so much distinction; released him forthwith from his confinement, and from all restriction in future with regard to his favourite indul-

gence. The loss of the Moslems in this single action is stated at 2000, and that of the Persians at 10,000 men.

On the third morning, the contest was again commenced; and if we may conjecture from the title of the Day of Cormorants, the carnage must have exceeded that of the preceding. The Arabs shouted one universal *tecbir* to terrify the enemy; yet such was the desperate pertinacity with which both sides maintained their ground, that "when the ministers of destiny," to use the flowery language of the Eastern historians, "had conducted the chariot of the sun to the obscure chambers of the West, the battle still raged, with unabated fierceness, by the light of their flambeaux, during the whole of the succeeding night; the cupbearers of death busily paraded the bloody field with remorseless rapacity, administering to the unfortunate the bitter draught of dissolution, while the stars in the enamelled vault of heaven continued to witness the sanguinary tumult till the harbingers of the morning announced the return of day." This nocturnal conflict received the whimsical though descriptive name of the Night of Barking; from the discordant clamours of the troops resembling the inarticulate sounds of ferocious animals.

Neither fatigue nor want of rest could slacken their exertions, till near the noon of the fourth day, when a real or imaginary whirlwind drove a cloud of dust against the faces of the infidels. It bore away the pavilion or canopy under which Roostum, on his bed of state, was viewing the progress of the action; and so impetuous were the heat and the tempest, that he was compelled to take shelter among the baggage-mules. The ranks of the Persians were soon thrown into disorder, and attacked by the Arabs, better accustomed to the hurricanes of the Desert. The empty throne arrested their attention; abandoned by its master, who was detected behind one of the beasts of burden. The beau-

ty of his tiara, and the surpassing richness of his girdle and mail, proclaimed the prize which fortune had cast in their way. The danger was imminent, and in the hope of escape he threw himself into the rivulet. Hullal instantly dismounted; plunged without hesitation after him into the stream; and, seizing him in the struggle by the heel, he succeeded in making him his prisoner. The victor then ascended the throne, and with the head of the Persian general fixed on his lance, announced to the armies that "the Lord of the Kaaba was triumphant." Galen experienced a similar destiny, being overthrown and slain in the flight. The Moslems confess a loss of 7500 men, and reckon that of the enemy at 100,000. There may be partial exaggeration in the narrative and numbers of this famous battle; but one thing is certain, it determined the fate of Persia.

Saad appropriated the spoil, the magnitude and value of which excited the admiration of the conquerors. To Hullal he assigned the costly habiliments of Roostum; the tiara alone was estimated at 100,000 dinars (46,250*£.*), and his girdle at 70,000 (32,375*£.*). The armour of Galen was adjudged to Zoharah, who received an additional sum of 30,000 dinars (13,875*£.*), in exchange for the imperial standard of Persia, which he had the fortune to take. This celebrated banner was originally the apron of Kawah, a blacksmith of Ispahan, whose intrepidity freed his country from the bloody tyrant Zohauk, and raised Feridoon to the throne. It was rich in ornaments to which every succeeding king had made contributions; and at the time of the Mohammedan conquests, it had increased from its original shape and size to the length of two and twenty feet, by fifteen in breadth, covered with jewels of very great value. These, however, comprised but a small portion of the sumptuous booty of Cadesia, which included among

other articles two shields, each reckoned worth 1,000,100 drachms (22,919*£*.)

The ludicrous mistakes the Arabs show their ignorance of their own good fortune. Camphor, to the name and properties of which they seem to have been entire strangers, they mingled with their bread, mistaking that odoriferous gum for salt, and were surprised at its bitter taste. "I will give any quantity of this yellow metal for a little of the white," said the soldiers of the Desert, who willingly offered gold, which they had never seen, in exchange for silver, the use of which was better known. The legal fifth was conveyed to Medina, consisting of treasure beyond computation, jewels inestimable, furniture of gold and silver, brocades and cloths of silk, embroidered caparisons of horses, camels, mules, and arms of every description.

The victory of Cadesia was followed by other more rapid and extensive conquests. Saad, in the month of November, crossed the Euphrates, and in a single battle reduced the whole Mesopotamian peninsula. With a force augmented to 60,000 horse he next crossed the deep waters of the Tigris: the terrified Persians had fled without offering the least opposition, and could not forbear exclaiming that an army of demons was coming upon them. These accumulated losses, and a superstitious belief that the last day of their religion and empire was at hand, induced Yezdijird to abandon his capital of Madayn. Having lodged a considerable part of his treasures in boats on the Tigris, he fled to Jelwallah, at the foot of the Median hills, taking with him his family and the more valuable of his effects. The spiritless troops followed his example, leaving their country at the mercy of the Saracens, who marched onward, shouting in religious transport, as they entered the gates of the deserted metropolis, "This is the white pa-

lace of Khoosroo ! This is the promise of the apostle of God !”

The invaders could not express their mingled sensations of surprise and delight, while surveying in this splendid capital the miracles of architecture and art, the gilded palaces, the strong and stately porticoes, the abundance of victuals in the most exquisite variety and profusion, which feasted their senses and courted their observation on every side. Every street added to their astonishment, every chamber revealed a new treasure; and the greedy spoilers were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hopes or their knowledge. To a people emerging from barbarism, the various wonders which rose before them in all directions, like the effect of magic, must have been a striking spectacle. We may therefore believe them when they affirm, what is not improbable, that the different articles of merchandise,—the rich and beautiful pieces of manufacture which fell a prey on this occasion,—were in such incalculable abundance, that the thirtieth part of their estimate was more than the imagination could embrace. The gold and silver, the various wardrobes and precious furniture, surpassed, says Abulfeda, the calculation of fancy or numbers; and the historian Elmacin ventured to compute these untold and almost infinite stores at the value of 3,000,000,000 pieces of gold.*

* Gibbon (in a note, Chap. li.) ventures to arraign the accuracy of Elmacin, or rather of the Latin version of Erpenius. But the accuracy of the Saracen historian, and his learned translator, is confirmed by Ockley (vol. i. p. 230), the original Arabic being correctly rendered 3,000,000,000 pieces of gold. The pompous arrogance of Gibbon, who confessed himself “totally ignorant” of oriental languages, is rather amusing, in charging with error a man who is celebrated as the restorer of Arabic literature in Europe. “Erpenius felicissimus, ille Arabicarum literarum instaurator” is the compliment paid him by Hottinger. If we take each of these pieces at the value of a dinar, which in all probability was the price meant, then the whole will be equivalent to 1,387,500,000*l.* sterling, exceeding by 139,159,375*l.* sterling the total value of gold and silver extracted from the mines of America between the years 1499 and 1803, a period of 304 years. But when we take into account the difference in the value of money

One article in this prodigious booty, before which all others seemed to recede in comparison, was the superb and celebrated carpet of silk and gold cloth, sixty cubits in length and as many in breadth, which decorated one of the apartments of the palace. It was wrought into a paradise or garden, with jewels of the most curious and costly species; the ruby, the emerald, the sapphire, the beryl, topaz, and pearl being arranged with such consummate skill as to represent, in beautiful mosaic, trees, fruits and flowers, rivulets and fountains; rose and shrubs of every description seemed to combine their fragrance and their foliage to charm the senses of the beholders.

This piece of exquisite luxury and illusion, to which the Persians gave the name of *Baharistan*, or mansion of perpetual spring, was an invention employed by their monarchs as an artificial substitute for that loveliest of seasons. During the gloom of winter they were accustomed to regale the nobles of their court on this magnificent embroidery, where art had supplied the absence of nature and wherein the guests might trace a brilliant imitation of her faded beauties in the variegated colours of the jewelled and pictured floor. In the hope that the eyes of the caliph might be delighted with this superb display of wealth and workmanship, Saad persuaded the soldiers to relinquish their claims. It was therefore added to the fifth of the spoil which was conveyed to Medina on the backs of camels. But Omar, with that rigid impartiality from which he never deviated, ordered the gaudy trophy to be cut up into small pieces, and distributed among the chief members of the Mohammedan commonwealth. Such was the intrinsic value of the materials, that the share of Ali alone, not larger than the palm of a man's hand, was afterward sold for 20,000 drachms (458*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*), or according to others,

then and now, the whole produce of all the gold and silver mines on the globe would not amount to that sum in 1000 years.

for as many dinars (9250*£*). Out of this vast store the caliph granted pensions to every member of his court in regular gradation, from the individuals of the Prophet's family to the lowest of his companions, varying from 275*£*. to 4*£*. 11*s*. per annum.

The military part of the booty was divided into 60,000 shares, and every horseman had 12,000 dinars (5550*£*.); hence, if the army consisted of 10,000 cavalry, their united shares would amount to the incredible sum of 333,000,000*£*. sterling. The crown and wardrobe of Khoosroo, richly adorned with jewels, had been removed; but the mule that carried them away was overtaken by the pursuers, and the spoils of the great king were lodged in the treasury of Medina. On this occasion was fulfilled, as the Moslems affirm, a prophecy of their apostle, that Soraka (the hairy veteran who had nearly taken him prisoner on his flight from Mecca) should wear the belt and bracelets of Khoosroo Purveez. The sack of Madayn (or Ctesiphon), which happened the same year with the reduction of Jerusalem, was followed by its desertion and gradual decay. A single arch, supposed to be the entrance to the palace, is the only vestige that remains to indicate the spot where once stood the proud capital of the Sassanides.

The air, perhaps the luxuries, of Madayn, was found to disagree with the constitution of the Arabs. Saad, with some difficulty, obtained leave of the caliph to withdraw to the western side of the Euphrates, where on the border of their native deserts, he lodged his followers in a cantonment of mats and reeds. Cufa is the name, in the language of Arabia, for a residence constructed of such materials; but after its destruction by fire it rose from its ashes, and became celebrated under its original appellation as the temporary seat of the caliphate. Another city (Bassora), equally famous, was founded by the Arabs at the same

time; with a view of intercepting the communication between Persia and the shores of Hindostan.

The Saracens pushed on their conquests with unabated vigour. No fewer than seventy-seven towns were reduced under their yoke, including Susa, the capital of Susiana or Chusistan. But the turbulent spirit of the new colony at Cufa occasioned a change in the generalship of the army. Saad was replaced by Amar ibn Yasser, a name of considerable celebrity in the annals of Islam. His removal imboldened Yezdijird, who had been driven from Jelwallah with the loss of 100,000 men and immense treasure, to make another effort for the recovery of his dominions. Troops drawn from Khorasan, Rhe Hamadan, and those provinces which the spoliation of the enemy had not yet reached were assembled, to the number of 150,000; the command of whom was assigned to Firoozan, one of his ablest generals. Amar applied to Medina for reinforcements; and Nooman ibn Makran was the person selected by Omar as leader of the Saracen host, which amounted only to 30,000 men.

Navahund, an obscure town among the hills, 45 miles south of Hamadan (the ancient Ecbatana), was the memorable post where the Persians ventured to make a final stand for their religion and their country. Their position was strong, fortified with a rampart and a ditch; and two months were wasted in a series of partial and ineffectual hostilities. Firoozan made tenders of accommodation, which, as usual, ended in disappointment. On admission into his pavilion, the rude Arab who acted as ambassador, perceiving him seated on a golden throne with a radiant tiara on his brow, and a crowd of officers standing around, insolently declared that until they were masters of the royal emblems that glittered so brilliantly before him, his countrymen would never consent to recede; and without further ceremony, bounding forward, he seated himself on the throne by the side of the Persian

satrap. The negotiation ended with the alternative of tribute or battle. The contest was long and obstinate before success declared for either party. In marshalling his troops, Nooman thus addressed them :—" My friends prepare yourselves to conquer, or drink of the sweet sherbet of martyrdom. I shall call the tecbir three times ; at the first, gird your loins ; at the second mount your steeds ; at the third, point your lances, and rush to victory or paradise." On the third day, early in the action, this leader fell mortally wounded by an arrow. He had delayed the attack till the afternoon, the favourite hour of battle with the Prophet, at the moment when the supplications of the faithful from every pulpit and mosque were ascending to heaven in aid of their armies ; and when he received his wound was in the act of giving the last tecbir. His death was concealed ; but a day of terrible slaughter irrevocably sealed the destiny of the ill-fated empire. Thirty thousand Persians were left on the field ; 80,000 perished amid the confusion in their own intrenchments ; 4000 who fled with Ferozan to the neighbouring mountains were overtaken, and all put to the sword. The loss of the Moslems was great, but the result was decisive ; and the triumph at Nahavund, achieved in the twenty-first year of the Hejira, is remembered by the Arabs as the *Victory of Victories*. The booty was prodigious, though small when compared with the wealth of the metropolis. In the equipage of the flying general, it is said, was a crowd of mules and camels laden with honey,—an incident that may serve to indicate the luxurious impediments of an oriental army. The unhappy Yezdijird was thunderstruck by this new disaster. He fled from city to city,—his own governors shutting their gates against him,—until at length he fell near Meru, by the hand of an assassin. He was the last sovereign of a dynasty that had governed Persia during 415 years. His daughters were carried into captivity, and given in

marraige to the victors. Hassan, the son of Ali, espoused the one, and Mohammed, the son of Abu Beker, the other; and thus the race of the caliphs and imams was ennobled by the blood of their royal mothers.

After the defeat at Nahavund, the Saracen leaders soon overran the whole country as far as the Oxus, destroying with bigoted fury all that was useful, grand, or sacred. Hamadan surrendered on capitulation; and Ispahan, after a brave resistance, was compelled to submit to the prowess of Abdallah. The cities of Shirwan, Rhe, Tabreez or Tauris, Casbin and Kom were taken while the provinces of Azerbajan and Mazunderan, comprehending the ancient Media, Armenia, and Hyrcania, fell before the march of the conquerors, who thus extended their victories from the shores of the Caspian to the Mediterranean. Their progress eastward was equally rapid and extensive. By the direction of Omar, 20,000 men invaded the province of Khorasan, which, with those of Kerman, Mekran, Seistan and the distant Balkh, were added to the possessions of Islam. On the walls of Ahwaz, Istakhar (the renowned Persepolis, and capital of Fars), Kej, Herat, Meru, and other places of importance, the standard of Mohammed was planted by his impetuous disciples. The greater portion of the vanquished, preferring the abandonment of their religion to oppression or death, adopted the faith of their new masters, while the recusants fled self-banished into distant lands. The administration of Persia was regulated by an actual survey of the people, the cattle, and the fruits of the earth,—a monument which attests the vigilance and justice of Omar. With amazing celerity the Arabs had traversed from the Indian Ocean to the Oxus; but these vast acquisitions were not yet perfectly secured. The succeeding caliphs had many formidable insurrections to quell in their Persian dominions. On various occasions, the inhabitants evinc-

ed their abhorrence of a foreign yoke, and their regard for the fire-worship of their ancestors; until at length defeat, massacre, and exile quashed the spirit of revolt, and succeeded, with few exceptions, in blending the vanquished with their oppressors under the united and powerful sway of the Koran.*

* "The Arabs in Khorasan, in Balkh and even in the vicinity of Bokharra are still numerous; but, except in the former they have no chief, of any distinction, it having been the policy of both the Tartars and Afghans to scatter and weaken them. Though many of these tribes have preserved the name and appearance of Arabians, they have completely lost the language." *Malcolm's History of Persia*, vol. i, p. 146.

